BK00631687

Record Of A Girlhood
V2

Fanny Kemble

RECORD OF A GIRLHOOD.

BY

FRANCES ANN KEMBLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.
1878.

(*All rights reserved.*)

This scarce antiquarian book is included in our special *Legacy Reprint Series*. In the interest of creating a more extensive selection of rare historical book reprints, we have chosen to reproduce this title even though it may possibly have occasional imperfections such as missing and blurred pages, missing text, poor pictures, markings, dark backgrounds and other reproduction issues beyond our control. Because this work is culturally important, we have made it available as a part of our commitment to protecting, preserving and promoting the world's literature.

RECORD OF A GIRLHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

Alfred Tennyson had only just gathered his earliest laurels. My brother John gave me the first copy of his poems I ever possessed, with a prophecy of his future fame and excellence written on the fly-leaf of it. I have never ceased to exult in my possession of that copy of the first edition of those poems, which became the songs of our every day and every hour, almost; we delighted in them and knew them by heart, and read and said them over and over again incessantly; they were our pictures, our music, and infinite was the scorn and indignation with which we received the slightest word of adverse criticism upon them. I remember Mrs. Milman, one evening at my father's house, challenging me laughingly about my enthusiasm for Tennyson, and asking me if I had read a certain severely caustic and condemnatory article in the *Quarterly* upon his poems. "Have you read it?" said she; "it is so amusing! Shall I send

it to you?" "No, thank you," said I; "have you read the poems, may I ask?" "I cannot say that I have," said she, laughing. "Oh, then," said I (not laughing), "perhaps it would be better that I should send you those?"

It has always been incomprehensible to me how the author of those poems ever brought himself to alter them, as he did, in so many instances—all (as it seemed to me) for the worse rather than the better. I certainly could hardly love his verses better than he did himself, but the various changes he made in them have always appeared to me cruel disfigurements of the original thoughts and expressions, which were to me treasures not to be touched even by his hand; and his changing lines which I had thought perfect, omitting beautiful stanzas that I loved, and interpolating others that I hated, and disfiguring and maiming his own exquisite creations with second thoughts (none of which were best to me), has caused me to rejoice, while I mourn, over my copy of the first version of "The May Queen," "Œnone," "The Miller's Daughter," and all the subsequent *improved* poems, of which the improvements were to me desecrations. In justice to Tennyson, I must add that the present generation of his readers swear by *their* version of his poems as we did by ours, for the same reason,—they knew it first.

The early death of Arthur Hallam, and the imperishable monument of love raised by Tennyson's genius to his memory, have tended to give him a pre-eminence among the companions of his youth which I do not think his abilities would have won for him had he lived; though they were undoubtedly of a high order.

There was a gentleness and purity almost virginal in his voice, manner, and countenance; and the upper part of his face, his forehead and eyes (perhaps in readiness for his early translation), wore the angelic radiance that they still must wear in heaven. Some time or other, at some rare moments of the divine spirit's supremacy in our souls, we all put on the heavenly face that will be ours hereafter, and for a brief lightning space our friends behold us as we shall look when this mortal has put on immortality. On Arthur Hallam's brow and eyes this heavenly light, so fugitive on other human faces, rested habitually, as if he was thinking and seeing in heaven.

Of all those very remarkable young men, John Sterling was by far the most brilliant and striking in his conversation, and the one of whose future eminence we should all of us have augured most confidently. But though his life was cut off prematurely, it was sufficiently prolonged to disprove this estimate of his powers. The extreme vividness of his look, manner, and speech gave a wonderful impression of latent vitality and power; perhaps some of this lambent, flashing brightness may have been but the result of the morbid physical conditions of his existence, like the flush on his cheek and the fire in his eye; the over stimulated and excited intellectual activity, the offspring of disease, mistaken by us for morning instead of sunset splendour, promise of future light and heat instead of prognostication of approaching darkness and decay. It certainly has always struck me as singular that Sterling, who in his life accomplished so little and left so little of the work by which men are generally

pronounced to be gifted with exceptional ability, should have been the subject of two such interesting biographies as those written of him by Julius Hare and Carlyle. I think he must have been one of those persons in whom genius makes itself felt and acknowledged chiefly through the medium of personal intercourse; a not infrequent thing, I think, with women, and perhaps men, wanting the full vigour of normal health. I suppose it is some failure not so much in the power possessed as in the power of producing it in a less evanescent form than that of spoken words, and the looks that with such organizations are more than the words themselves. Sterling's genius was his *Wesen*, himself, and he could detach no portion of it that retained anything like the power and beauty one would have expected. After all, the world has twice been moved (once intellectually and once morally), as never before or since, by those whose spoken words, gathered up by others, are all that remain of them. Personal influence is the strongest and the most subtle of powers, and Sterling impressed all who knew him as a man of undoubted genius; those who never knew him will perhaps always wonder why.

My life was rather sad at this time: my brother's failure at college was a source of disappointment and distress to my parents; and I, who admired him extremely, and believed in him implicitly, was grieved at his miscarriage and his absence from England; while the darkening prospects of the theatre threw a gloom over us all. My hitherto frequent interchange of letters with my dear friend H—— S——, had become interrupted and almost suspended by the pro-

longed and dangerous illness of her brother; and I was thrown almost entirely upon myself, and was finding my life monotonously dreary, when events occurred that changed its whole tenor almost suddenly, and determined my future career with less of deliberation than would probably have satisfied either my parents or myself under less stringent circumstances.

It was in the autumn of 1829, my father being then absent on a professional tour in Ireland, that my mother, coming in from walking one day, threw herself into a chair and burst into tears. She had been evidently much depressed for some time past, and I was alarmed at her distress, of which I begged her to tell me the cause. "Oh, it has come at last," she answered; "our property is to be sold. I have seen that fine building all covered with placards and bills of sale; the theatre must be closed, and I know not how many hundred poor people will be turned adrift without employment!" I believed the theatre employed regularly seven hundred persons in all its different departments, without reckoning the great number of what were called supernumeraries, who were hired by the night at Christmas, Easter, and on all occasions of any specially showy spectacle. Seized with a sort of terror, like the Lady of Shallott, that "the curse had come upon me," I comforted my mother with expressions of pity and affection, and, as soon as I left her, wrote a most urgent entreaty to my father that he would allow me to act for myself, and seek employment as a governess, so as to relieve him at once at least of the burden of my maintenance. I brought this letter to my mother, and begged her permission to

send it, to which she consented; but, as I afterwards learnt, she wrote by the same post to my father, requesting him not to give a positive answer to my letter until his return to town. The next day she asked me whether I seriously thought I had any real talent for the stage. My school-day triumphs in Racine's "Andromaque" were far enough behind me, and I could only answer, with as much perplexity as good faith, that I had not the slightest idea whether I had or not. She begged me to learn some part and say it to her, that she might form some opinion of my power, and I chose Shakespeare's Portia, then, as now, my ideal of a perfect woman—the wise, witty woman, loving with all her soul, and submitting with all her heart to a man whom everybody but herself (who was the best judge) would have judged her inferior; the laughter-loving, light-hearted, true-hearted, deep-hearted woman, full of keen perception, of active efficiency, of wisdom prompted by love, of tenderest unselfishness, of generous magnanimity; noble, simple, humble, pure; true, dutiful, religious, and full of fun; delightful above all others, the woman of women. Having learnt it by heart, I recited Portia to my mother, whose only comment was, "There is hardly passion enough in this part to test any tragic power. I wish you would study Juliet for me." Study to me then, as unfortunately long afterwards, simply meant to learn by heart, which I did again, and repeated my lesson to my mother, who again heard me without any observation whatever. Meantime my father returned to town and my letter remained unanswered, and I was wondering in my

mind what reply I should receive to my urgent entreaty, when one morning my mother told me she wished me to recite Juliet to my father; and so in the evening I stood up before them both, and with indescribable trepidation repeated my first lesson in tragedy.

They neither of them said anything beyond, "Very well,—very nice, my dear," with many kisses and caresses, from which I escaped to sit down on the stairs half-way between the drawing-room and my bed-room, and get rid of the repressed nervous fear I had struggled with while reciting, in floods of tears. A few days after this, my father told me he wished to take me to the theatre with him to try whether my voice was of sufficient strength to fill the building; so thither I went. That strange-looking place, the stage, with its racks of pasteboard and canvas—streets, forests, banqueting-halls, and dungeons—drawn apart on either side, was empty and silent; not a soul was stirring in the indistinct recesses of its mysterious depths, which seemed to stretch indefinitely behind me. In front, the great amphitheatre, equally empty and silent, wrapped in its grey holland covers, would have been absolutely dark but for a long, sharp, thin shaft of light that darted here and there from some height and distance far above me, and alighted in a sudden, vivid spot of brightness on the stage. Set down in the midst of twilight space, as it were, with only my father's voice coming to me from where he stood hardly distinguishable in the gloom, in those poetical utterances of pathetic passion I was seized with the spirit of the thing; my voice resounded

through the great vault above and before me, and, completely carried away by the inspiration of the wonderful play, I acted Juliet as I do not believe I ever acted it again, for I had no visible Romeo, and no audience to thwart my imagination; at least, I had no consciousness of any, though in truth I had one. In the back of one of the private boxes, commanding the stage but perfectly invisible to me, sat an old and warmly attached friend of my father's, Major D——, a man of the world—of London society,—a passionate lover of the stage, an amateur actor of no mean merit, one of the members of the famous Cheltenham dramatic company, a first-rate critic in all things connected with art and literature, a refined and courtly, courteous gentleman; the best judge, in many respects, that my father could have selected, of my capacity for my profession and my chance of success in it. Not till after the event had justified my kind old friend's prophecy did I know that he had witnessed that morning's performance, and joining my father at the end of it had said, "Bring her out at once; it will be a great success." And so three weeks from that time I was brought out, and it was a "great success." Three weeks was not much time for preparation of any sort for such an experiment, but I had no more, to become acquainted with my fellow actors and actresses, not one of whom I had ever spoken with or seen—off the stage—before; to learn all the technical *business*, as it is called, of the stage; how to carry myself towards the audience, which was not—but was to be—before me; how to concert my movements with the movements of those I was acting with,

so as not to impede or intercept their efforts, while giving the greatest effect of which I was capable to my own.

I do not wonder, when I remember this brief apprenticeship to my profession, that Mr. Macready once said that I did not know the elements of it. Three weeks of morning rehearsals of the play at the theatre, and evening consultations at home as to colours and forms of costume, what I should wear, how my hair should be dressed, etc., etc.,—in all which I remained absolutely passive in the hands of others, taking no part and not much interest in the matter,—ended in my mother's putting aside all suggestions of innovation like the adoption of the real picturesque costume of mediæval Verona (which was, of course, Juliet's proper dress), and determining in favour of the traditional stage costume for the part, which was simply a dress of plain white satin with a long train, with short sleeves and a low body; my hair was dressed in the fashion in which I usually wore it; a girdle of fine paste brilliants, and a small comb of the same, which held up my hair, were the only theatrical parts of the dress, which was as perfectly simple and as absolutely unlike anything Juliet ever wore as possible.

Poor Mrs. Jameson made infinite protests against this decision of my mother's, her fine artistic taste and sense of fitness being intolerably shocked by the violation of every propriety in a Juliet attired in a modern white satin ball dress amid scenery representing the streets and palaces of Verona in the fourteenth century, and all the other characters dressed with

some reference to the supposed place and period of the tragedy. Visions too, no doubt, of sundry portraits of Raphael, Titan, Giorgione, Bronzino,—beautiful alike in colour and fashion,—vexed her with suggestions, with which she plied my mother; who, however, determined as I have said, thinking the body more than raiment, and arguing that the unincumbered use of the person, and the natural grace of young arms, neck, and head, and unimpeded movement of the limbs (all which she thought more compatible with the simple white satin dress than the picturesque mediæval costume) were points of paramount importance. My mother, though undoubtedly very anxious that I should look well, was of course far more desirous that I should act well, and judged that whatever rendered my dress most entirely subservient to my acting, and least an object of preoccupation and strange embarrassment to myself, was, under the circumstances of my total inexperience and brief period of preparation, the thing to be chosen, and I am sure that in the main she judged wisely. The mere appendage of a train—three yards of white satin—following me wherever I went, was to me a new, and would have been a difficult experience to most girls. As it was, I never knew, after the first scene of the play, what became of my train, and was greatly amused when Lady Dacre told me, the next morning, that as soon as my troubles began I had snatched it up and carried it on my arm, which I did quite unconsciously, because I found something in the way of *Juliet's feet*.

I have often admired the consummate good sense

with which, confronting a whole array of authorities, historical, artistical, æsthetical, my mother stoutly maintained in their despite that nothing was to be adopted on the stage that was in itself ugly, ungraceful, or even curiously antiquated and singular, however correct it might be with reference to the particular period, or even to authoritative portraits of individual characters of the play. The passions, sentiments, actions, and sufferings of human beings, she argued, were the main concern of a fine drama, not the clothes they wore. I think she even preferred an unobtrusive indifference to a pedantic accuracy, which, she said, few people appreciated, and which, if anything, rather took the attention from the acting than added to its effect, when it was really fine.

She always said, when pictures and engravings were consulted, "Remember, this presents but one view of the person, and does not change its position: how will this dress look when it walks, runs, rushes, kneels, sits down, falls, and turns its back?" I think an edge was added to my mother's keen, rational, and highly artistic sense of this matter of costume because it was the special hobby of her "favourite aversion," Mr. E——, who had studied with great zeal and industry antiquarian questions connected with the subject of stage representations, and was perpetually suggesting to my father improvements on the old ignorant careless system which prevailed under former managements.

It is very true that, as she said, Garrick acted Macbeth in a full court suit of scarlet,—knee-breeches, powdered wig, pigtail, and all; and Mrs. Siddons

acted the Grecian Daughter in piles of powdered curls, with a forest of feathers on the top of them, high-heeled shoes, and a portentous hoop; and both made the audience believe that they looked just as they should do. But for all that, actors and actresses who were neither Garrick nor Mrs. Siddons were not less like the parts they represented by being at least dressed as they should be; and the fine accuracy of the Shakespearean revivals of Mr. Macready and Charles Kean was in itself a great enjoyment; nobody was ever told to *omit* the tithing of mint and cummin, though other matters were more important; and Kean's Othello would have been the grand performance it was, even with the advantage of Mr. Fechter's clever and picturesque "getting up" of the play, as a frame to it; as Mademoiselle Rachel's wonderful fainting exclamation of "Oh, mon cher Curiace!" lost none of its poignant pathos, though she knew how every fold of her drapery fell and rested on the chair on which she sank in apparent unconsciousness. Criticizing a portrait of herself in that scene, she said to the painter, "Ma robe ne fait pas ce pli la; elle fait, au contraire, celui-ci." The artist, inclined to defend his picture, asked her how, while she was lying with her eyes shut and feigning utter insensibility, she could possibly tell anything about the plaits of her dress. "Allez-y-voir," replied Rachel; and the next time she played Camille, the artist was able to convince himself by more careful observation that she was right, and that there was probably no moment of the piece at which this consummate artist was not aware of the effect produced by every line

and fold of the exquisite costume, of which she had studied and prepared every detail as carefully as the wonderful movements of her graceful limbs, the intonations of her awful voice, and the changing expressions of her terribly beautiful countenance.

In later years, after I became the directress of my own stage costumes, I adopted one for Juliet, made after a beautiful design of my friend, Mrs. Jameson, which combined my mother's *sine qua non* of simplicity with a form and fashion in keeping with the supposed period of the play.

My frame of mind under the preparations that were going forward for my *début* appears to me now curious enough. Though I had found out that I could act, and had acted with a sort of frenzy of passion and entire self-forgetfulness the first time I ever uttered the wonderful conception I had undertaken to represent, my going on the stage was absolutely an act of duty and conformity to the will of my parents, strengthened by my own conviction that I was bound to help them by every means in my power. The theatrical profession was, however, utterly distasteful to me, though *acting* itself, that is to say, dramatic personation, was not; and every detail of my future vocation, from the preparations behind the scenes to the representations before the curtain, was more or less repugnant to me. Nor did custom ever render this aversion less; and liking my work so little, and being so devoid of enthusiasm, respect, or love for it, it is wonderful to me that I ever achieved *any* success in it at all. The dramatic element inherent in my organization must have been

very powerful, to have enabled me without either study of or love for my profession to do anything worth anything in it.

But this is the reason why, with an unusual gift and many unusual advantages for it, I did really so little; why my performances were always uneven in themselves and perfectly unequal with each other, never complete as a whole, however striking in occasional parts, and never at the same level two nights together; depending for their effect upon the state of my nerves and spirits, instead of being the result of deliberate thought and consideration,—study, in short, carefully and conscientiously applied to my work; the permanent element which preserves the artist, however inevitably he must feel the influence of moods of mind and body, from ever being at their mercy.

I brought but one half the necessary material to the exercise of my profession, that which nature gave me; and never added the cultivation and labour requisite to produce any fine performance in the right sense of the word; and, coming of a family of *real* artists, have never felt that I deserved that honourable name.

A letter written at this time to Miss S—— shows how comparatively small a part my approaching ordeal engrossed of my thoughts.

James Street, September 24, 1829.

My dearest H——,

Your letter grieved me very much, but it did not surprise me; of your brother's serious illness I

had heard from my cousin, Horace Twiss. But is there indeed cause for the terrible anxiety you express? I know how impossible it is to argue with the apprehensions of affection, and should have forborne this letter altogether, but that I felt very deeply your kindness in writing to me at such a time, and that I would fain assure you of my heart-felt sympathy, however unavailing it may be. To you who have a steadfast anchor for your hopes, I ought not, perhaps, to say, "Do not despond." Yet, dearest H——, do not despond: is there *any* occasion when despair is justified? I know how lightly all soothing counsel must be held, in a case of such sorrow as yours, but among fellow-Christians such words still have some significance; for the most unworthy of that holy profession may point unfalteringly to the only consolations adequate to the need of those far above them in every endowment of mind and heart and religious attainment. Dear H——, I hardly know how to tell you how much I feel for you, how sincerely I hope your fears may prove groundless, and how earnestly I pray that, should they prove prophetic, you may be enabled to bear the affliction, to meet which I doubt not strength will be given you. This is all I dare say; those who love you best will hardly venture to say more. To put away entirely the idea of an evil which one may be called upon at any moment to encounter would hardly be wise, even if it were possible, in this world where every happiness one enjoys is but a loan, the repayment of which may be exacted at the very moment, perhaps, when we are forgetting in its possession the precarious tenure by which alone it is ours.

My dear father and mother have both been very unwell; the former is a little recovered, but the latter is still in a sad state of bodily suffering and mental anxiety. Our two boys are well and happy, and I am very well and not otherwise than happy. I regret to say Mrs. Henry Siddons will leave London in a very short time; this is a great loss to me. I owe more to her than I can ever repay; for though abundant pains had been bestowed upon me previously to my going to her, it was she who caused to spring whatever scattered seeds of good were in me, which almost seemed as if they had been cast into the soil in vain.

My dear H——, I am going on the stage: the nearest period talked of for my *début* is the first of October, at the opening of the theatre; the furthest, November; but I almost think I should prefer the nearest, for it is a very serious trial to look forward to, and I wish it were over. Juliet is to be my opening part, but not to my father's Romeo; there would be many objections to that; he will do Mercutio for me. I do not enter more fully upon this, because I know how few things can be of interest to you in your present state of feeling, but I wished you not to find the first notice of my entrance on the stage of life in a newspaper. God bless you, dearest H——, and grant you better hopes.

Your most affectionate

FANNY.

My father not acting Romeo with me deprived me of the most poetical and graceful stage lover of his

day; but the public, who had long been familiar with his rendering of the part of Romeo, gained as much as I lost, by his taking that of Mercutio, which has never since been so admirably represented, and I dare affirm will never be given more perfectly. The graceful ease, and airy sparkling brilliancy of his delivery of the witty fancies of that merry gentleman, the gallant defiance of his bearing towards the enemies of his house, and his heroically pathetic and humorous death-scene, were beyond description charming. He was one of the best Romeos, and incomparably *the* best Mercutio, that ever trod the English stage.

My father was Miss O'Neill's Romeo throughout her whole theatrical career, during which no other Juliet was tolerated by the English public. This amiable and excellent woman was always an attached friend of our family, and one day, when she was about to take leave of me, at the end of a morning visit, I begged her to let my father have the pleasure of seeing her, and ran to his study to tell him whom I had with me. He followed me hastily to the drawing-room, and stopping at the door, extended his arms towards her, exclaiming, "Ah, Juliet!" Lady Becher ran to him and embraced him with a pretty, affectionate grace, and the scene was pathetical as well as comical, for they were both white-haired, she being considerably upwards of sixty and he of seventy years old; but she still retained the slender elegance of her exquisite figure, and he some traces of his pre-eminent personal beauty.

My mother had a great admiration and personal regard for Lady Becher, and told me an anecdote of her

early life which transmitted those feelings of hers to me. Lord F——, eldest son of the Earl of E——, a personally and mentally attractive young man, fell desperately in love with Miss O'Neill, who was (what the popular theatrical heroine of the day always is) the realization of their ideal to the youth, male and female, of her time, the stage star of her contemporaries. Lord F——'s family had nothing to say against the character, conduct, or personal endowments of the beautiful actress who had enchanted, to such serious purpose as marriage, the heir of their house; but much, reasonably and rightly enough, against marriages disproportionate to such a degree as that, and the objectionable nature of the young woman's peculiar circumstances and public calling. Both Miss O'Neill, however, and Lord F—— were enough in earnest in their mutual regard to accept the test of a year's separation and suspension of all intercourse. She remained to utter herself in Juliet to the English public, and her lover went and travelled abroad, both believing in themselves and each other. No letters or communication passed between them; but towards the end of their year of probation vague rumours came flying to England of the life of dissipation led by the young man, and of the unworthy companions with whom he entertained the most intimate relations. After this came more explicit tales of positive entanglement with one particular person, and reports of an entire devotion to one object quite incompatible with the constancy professed and promised to his English mistress.

Probably aware that every effort would, till the last,

be made by Lord F——s family to detach them from each other, bound by her promise to hold no intercourse with him, but determined to take the verdict of her fate from no one but himself, Miss O'Neill obtained a brief leave of absence from her theatrical duties, went with her brother and sister to Calais, whence she travelled alone to Paris (poor, fair Juliet! when I think of her, not as I ever knew her, but such as I know she must then have been, no more pathetic image presents itself to my mind), and took effectual measures to ascertain beyond all shadow of doubt the bitter truth of the evil reports of her fickle lover's mode of life. His devotion to one lady, the more respectable form of infidelity which must inevitably have cancelled their contract of love, was not indeed true, and probably the story had been fabricated because the mere general accusation of profligacy might easily have been turned into an appeal to her mercy, as the result of reckless despondency and of his utter separation from her; and a woman in her circumstances might not have been hard to find who would have persuaded herself that she might overlook "all that," reclaim her lover, and be an Earl's wife. Miss O'Neill rejoined her family at Calais, wrote to Lord F——'s father, the Earl of E——, her final and irrevocable rejection of his son's suit, fell ill of love and sorrow, and lay for some space between life and death for the sake of her unworthy lover; rallied bravely, recovered, resumed her work,—her sway over thousands of human hearts,—and, after lapse of healing and forgiving and forgetting time, married Sir William Wrixon Becher.

The peculiar excellence of her acting lay in the expression of pathos, sorrow, anguish,—the sentimental and suffering element of tragedy. She was expressly devised for a representative victim; she had, too, a rare endowment for her especial range of characters, in an easily excited, superficial sensibility, which caused her to cry, as she once said to me, "buckets full," and enabled her to exercise the (to most men) irresistible influence of a beautiful woman in tears. The power (or weakness) of abundant weeping without disfigurement is an attribute of deficient rather than excessive feeling. In such persons the tears are poured from their crystal cups without muscular distortion of the rest of the face. In proportion to the violence or depth of emotion, and the acute or profound sensibility of the temperament, is the disturbance of the countenance. In sensitive organizations, the muscles round the nostrils and lips quiver and are distorted, the throat and temples swell, and a grimace, which but for its miserable significance would be grotesque, convulses the whole face. Men's tears always seem to me as if they were pumped up from their heels, and strained through every drop of blood in their veins; women's, to start as under a knife stroke, direct with a gush from their heart, abundant and beneficent; but again, women of the temperament I have alluded to above, have fountains of lovely tears behind their lovely eyes, and their weeping, which is indescribably beautiful, is comparatively painless, and yet pathetic enough to challenge tender compassion. I have twice seen such tears shed, and never forgotten them: once from

heaven-blue eyes, and the face looked like a flower with pearly dewdrops sliding over it; and again, once from magnificent, dark, uplifted orbs, from which the falling tears looked like diamond rain-drops by moonlight.

Miss O'Neill was a supremely touching, but neither a powerful nor a passionate actress. Personally, she was the very beau ideal of feminine weakness in its most attractive form—delicacy. She was tall, slender, elegantly formed, and extremely graceful; her features were regular and finely chiselled, and her hair beautiful; her eyes were too light, and her eyebrows and eyelashes too pale for expression; her voice wanted variety and brilliancy for comic intonation, but was deep and sonorous, and of a fine pathetic and tragic quality.

It was not an easy matter to find a Romeo for me, and in the emergency my father and mother even thought of my brother Henry's trying the part. He was in the first bloom of youth, and really might be called beautiful; and certainly, a few years later, might have been the very ideal of a Romeo. But he looked too young for the part, as indeed he was, being three years my junior. The overwhelming objection, however, was his own insuperable dislike to the idea of acting, and his ludicrous incapacity for assuming the faintest appearance of any sentiment. However, he learnt the words, and never shall I forget the explosion of laughter which shook my father, my mother, and myself, when, after hearing him recite the balcony scene with the most indescribable mixture of shy terror and nervous convulsions of suppressed

giggling, my father threw down the book, and Henry gave vent to his feelings by clapping his elbows against his sides and bursting into a series of triumphant cock-crows—an expression of mental relief so ludicrously in contrast with his sweet, sentimental face, and the part he had just been pretending to assume, that I thought we never should have recovered from the fits it sent us into. We were literally all crying with laughter, and a more farcical scene cannot be imagined. This, of course, ended all idea of that young chanticleer being my Romeo; and yet the young rascal was, or fancied he was, over head and ears in love at this very time, and an exquisite sketch Hayter had just made of him might with the utmost propriety have been sent to the exhibition with no other title than "Portrait of a Lover."

The part of Romeo was given to Mr. Abbot, an old-established favourite with the public, a very amiable and worthy man, old enough to have been my father, whose performance, not certainly of the highest order, was nevertheless not below inoffensive mediocrity. But the public, who were bent upon doing more than justice to me, were less than just to him; and the abuse showered upon his Romeo, especially by my more enthusiastic admirers of the male sex, might, I should think, have embittered his stage relations with me to the point of making me an object of detestation to him, all through our theatrical loves. A tragi-comic incident was related to me by one of the parties concerned in it, which certainly proved that poor Mr. Abbot was quite aware of the little favour his Romeo found with my particular friends. One of them, the

son of our kind and valued friends the G——s, an excellent, good-hearted, but not very wise young fellow, invariably occupied a certain favourite and favourable position in the midst of the third row of the pit every night that I acted. There were no stalls or reserved seats then, though not long after I came out the majority of the seats in the orchestra were let to spectators, and generally occupied by a set of young gentlemen whom Sir Thomas Lawrence always designated as my "body guard." This, however, had not yet been instituted, and my friend G—— had often to wait long hours, and even to fight for the privilege of his peculiar seat, where he rendered himself, I am sorry to say, not a little ludicrous, and not seldom rather obnoxious to everybody in his vicinity, by the vehement demonstrations of his enthusiasm—his frantic cries of "bravo," his furious applause, and his irrepressible exclamations of ecstasy and agony during the whole play. He became as familiar to the public as the stage lamps themselves and some of his immediate neighbours complained rather bitterly of the incessant din and clatter of his approbation, and the bruises, thumps, contusions, and constant fears which his lively sentiments inflicted upon them. This *fanatico* of mine, walking home from the theatre one night with two other like-minded individuals, indulged himself in obstreperous abuse of poor Mr. Abbot, in which he was heartily joined by his companions. Towards Cavendish Square the broad, quiet streets rang with the uproarious mirth with which they recapitulated his "damnable faces," "strange postures," uncouth gestures, and ungainly

deportment; imitation followed imitation of the poor actor's peculiar declamation, and the night became noisy with the shouts of mingled derision and execration of his critics; when suddenly, as they came to a gas-light at the corner of a crossing, a solitary figure which had been preceding them, without possibility of escape, down the long avenue of Harley Street, where G—— lived, turned abruptly round, and confronted them with Mr. Abbot's *un*impressive countenance. "Gentlemen," he said, "no one can be more aware than myself of the defects of my performance of Romeo, no one more conscious of its entire unworthiness of Miss Kemble's Juliet; but all I can say is, that I do not act the part by my own choice, and shall be delighted to resign it to either of you who may feel more capable than I am of doing it justice." The young gentlemen, though admiring me "not wisely, but too well," were good-hearted fellows, and were struck with the manly and moderate tone of Mr. Abbot's rebuke, and shocked at having unintentionally wounded the feelings of a person who (except as Romeo) was every way deserving of their respect. Of course they could not swallow all their foolish words, and Abbot bowed and was gone before they could stutter an apology. I have no doubt that his next appearance as Romeo was hailed with some very cordial, remorseful applause, addressed to him personally as some relief to their feelings, by my indiscreet partisans. My friend G——, not very long after this theatrical passion of his, became what is sometimes called "religious," and had thoughts of going into the Church, and

giving up the play-house. He confided to my mother, who was his mother's intimate friend, and of whom he was very fond, his conscientious scruples, which she in no wise combated; though she probably thought more moderation in going to the theatre, and a little more self-control when there, might not, in any event, be undesirable changes in his practice, whether his taking holy orders cut him off entirely from what was then his principal pleasure, or not. One night, when the venerable Prebend of St. Paul's, her old friend, Dr. Hughes, was in her box with her, witnessing my performance (which my mother never failed to attend), she pointed out G——, *scrimmaging* about, as usual, in his wonted place in the pit, and said, "There is a poor lad who is terribly disturbed in his own mind about the very thing he is doing at this moment. He is thinking of going into the Church, and more than half believes that he ought to give up coming to the play." "That depends, I should say," replied dear old Dr. Hughes, "upon his own conviction in the matter, and nothing else; meantime, pray give him my compliments, and tell him *I* have enjoyed the performance to-night extremely."

Mr. Abbot was in truth not a bad actor, though a perfectly uninteresting one in tragedy; he had a good figure, face, and voice, the carriage and appearance of a well-bred person, and, in what is called genteel comedy, precisely the air and manner which it is most difficult to assume, that of a gentleman. He had been in the army, and had left it for the stage, where his performances were always respectable, though seldom anything more. Wanting passion and expression in

tragedy, he naturally resorted to vehemence to supply their place, and was exaggerated and violent from the absence of all dramatic feeling and imagination. Moreover, in moments of powerful emotion he was apt to become unsteady on his legs, and always filled me with terror lest in some of his headlong runs and rushes about the stage he should lose his balance and fall; as indeed he once did, to my unspeakable distress, in the play of "The Grecian Daughter," in which he enacted my husband, Phocion, and flying to embrace me, after a period of painful and eventful separation, he completely overbalanced himself, and swinging round with me in his arms, we both came to the ground together. "Oh, Mr. Abbot!" was all I could ejaculate; he, poor man, literally pale green with dismay, picked me up in profound silence, and the audience kindly covered our confusion, and comforted us by vehement applause, not, indeed, unmixed with laughter. But my friends and admirers were none the more his after that exploit; and I remained in mortal dread of his stage embraces for ever after, steadying myself carefully on my feet, and bracing my whole figure to "stand fast," whenever he made the smallest affectionate approach towards me. It is not often that such a piece of awkwardness as this is perpetrated on the stage, but dramatic heroines are nevertheless liable to sundry disagreeable difficulties of a very unromantic nature. If a gentleman in a ball-room places his hand round a lady's waist to waltz with her, she can, without any shock to the "situation," beg him to release the end spray of her flowery garland, or the floating ribbons of her head-

dress, which he may have imprisoned; but in the middle of a scene of tragedy grief or horror, of the unreality of which, by dint of the effort of your imagination, you are no longer conscious, to be obliged to say, in your distraction, to your distracted partner in woe, "Please lift your arm from my waist, you are pulling my head down backwards," is a distraction too, of its kind.

The only occasion on which I ever acted Juliet to a Romeo who looked the part was one when Miss Ellen Tree sustained it. The acting of Romeo, or any other man's part by a woman (in spite of Mrs. Siddons's Hamlet), is, in my judgment, contrary to every artistic and perhaps natural propriety, but I cannot deny that the stature "more than common tall," and the beautiful face, of which the fine features were too marked in their classical regularity to look feeble or even effeminate, of my fair female lover made her physically an appropriate representative of Romeo. Miss Ellen Tree looked beautiful and not unmanly in the part; she was broad-shouldered as well as tall, and her long limbs had the fine proportions of the huntress Diana; altogether, she made a very "pretty fellow," as the saying was formerly, as all who saw her in her graceful performance of Talfourd's "Ion" will testify; but assumption of that character, which in its ideal classical purity is almost without sex, was less open to objection than that of the fighting young Veronese noble of the fourteenth century. She fenced very well, however, and acquitted herself quite manfully in her duel with Tybalt; the only hitch in the usual "business" of the part

was between herself and me, and I do not imagine the public, for one night, were much aggrieved by the omission of the usual clap-trap performance (part of Garrick's interpolation, which indeed belongs to the original story, but which Shakespeare's true poet's sense had discarded) of Romeo's plucking Juliet up from her bier and rushing with her, still stiff and motionless in her death-trance, down to the foot-lights. This feat Miss Tree insisted upon attempting with me, and I as stoutly resisted all her entreaties to let her do so. I was a very slender-looking girl, but very heavy for all that. (A friend of mine, on my first voyage to America, lifting me from a small height, set me down upon the deck, exclaiming, "Oh, you solid little lady!" and my cousin, John Mason, the first time he acted Romeo with me, though a very powerful, muscular young man, whispered to me as he carried my corpse down the stage with a fine semblance of frenzy, "Jove, Fanny, you are a lift!") Finding that all argument and remonstrance was unavailing, and that Miss Tree, though by no means other than a good friend and fellow-worker of mine, was bent upon performing this gymnastic feat, I said at last, "If you attempt to lift or carry me down the stage, I will kick and scream till you set me down," which ended the controversy. I do not know whether she believed me, but she did not venture upon the experiment.

I am reminded by this recollection of my pleasant professional fellowship with Miss Ellen Tree of a curious instance of the unprincipled, flagrant recklessness with which scandalous gossip is received

and circulated in what calls itself the best English society.

In Mr. Charles Greville's "Memoirs," he makes a statement that Miss Tree was never engaged at Covent Garden. The play-bills and the newspapers of the day abundantly contradicted this assertion (at the time he entered it in his diary), and, of course, the discreditable motive assigned for the *fact*.

I cannot help thinking that, had Mr. Greville lived, much of the voluminous record he kept of persons and events would have been withheld from publication. He told me, not long before his death, that he had no recollection whatever of the contents of the earlier volumes of his MS. journal which he had lent me to read; and it is infinitely to be regretted, if he did not look over them before they were published, that the discretion he exercised (or delegated) in the omission of certain passages was not allowed to prevail to the exclusion of others. Such partial omissions would not indeed alter the whole tone and character of the book, but might have mitigated the shock of painful surprise with which it was received by the society he described, and by no one more than some of those who had been on terms of the friendliest intimacy with him, and who had repeatedly heard him assert that his journal would never be published in the lifetime of any one mentioned in it.

I consider that I was quite justified in using even this naughty child's threat to prevent Miss Tree from doing what might very well have ended in some dangerous and ludicrous accident; nor did I feel at all guilty towards her of the species of malice prepense

which Malibran exhibited towards Sontag, when they sang in the opera of "Romeo and Juliet," on the first occasion of their appearing together during their brilliant public career in England. Malibran's mischievousness partook of the force and versatility of her extraordinary genius, and having tormented poor Mademoiselle Sontag with every inconceivable freak and caprice during the whole rehearsal of the opera, at length, when requested by her to say in what part of the stage she intended to fall in the last scene, she, Malibran, replied that she "really didn't know," that she "really couldn't tell;" sometimes she "died in one place, sometimes in another, just as it happened, or the humour took her at the moment." As Sontag was bound to expire in loving proximity to her, and was, I take it, much less liable to spontaneous inspiration than her fiery rival, this was by no means satisfactory. She had nothing like the original genius of the other woman, but was nevertheless a more perfect artist. Wanting weight and power and passion for such parts as Norma, Medea, Semiramide, etc., she was perfect in the tenderer and more pathetic parts of Amina, Lucia di Lammermoor, Linda di Chamouni; exquisite in the Rosina and Carolina of the "Barbiere" and "Matrimonio Segreto;" and, in my opinion, quite unrivalled in her Countess, in the "Nozze," and, indeed, in all rendering of Mozart's music, to whose peculiar and pre-eminent genius hers seemed to me in some degree allied, and of whose works she was the only interpreter I ever heard, gifted alike with the profound German understanding of music and the enchanting Italian power of rendering

it. Her mode of uttering sound, of putting forth her voice (the test which all but Italians, or most carefully Italian-trained singers, fail in), was as purely unteutonic as possible. She was one of the most perfect singers I ever heard, and suggests to my memory the quaint praise of the gipsy vocal performance in the ballad of "Johnny Faa"—

> "They sang so sweet,
> So very *complete*."

She was the first Rosina I ever heard who introduced into the scene of the music-lesson "Rhodes Air," with the famous violin variations, which she performed by way of a *vocalise*, to the utter amazement of her noble music-master, I should think, as well as her audience. Mademoiselle Nillson is the only prima donna since her day who has at all reminded me of Sontag, who was lovely to look at, delightful to listen to, good, amiable, and charming, and, compared with Malibran, like the evening star to a comet.

Defeated by Malibran's viciousness in rehearsing her death-scene, she resigned herself to the impromptu imposed upon her, and prepared to follow her Romeo, wherever *she* might choose to die; but, when the evening came, Malibran contrived to die close to the foot-lights and in front of the curtain; Sontag of necessity followed, and fell beside her there; the drop came down, and there lay the two fair corpses in full view of the audience, of course unable to rise or move, till a couple of stage footmen, in red plush breeches, ran in to the rescue, took the dead Capulet and Montague each by the shoulders, and

dragged them off at the side scenes; the Spanish woman in the heroism of her maliciousness submitting to this ignominy for the pleasure of subjecting her gentle German rival to it.

Madame Malibran was always an object of the greatest interest to me, not only on account of her extraordinary genius, and great and various gifts, but because of the many details I heard of her youth from M. de la Forest, the French consul in New York, who knew her as Marie Garcia, a wild and wayward but most wonderful girl, under her father's tyrannical and harsh rule during the time they spent in the United States. He said that there was not a piece of furniture in their apartment that had not been thrown by the father at the daughter's head, in the course of the moral and artistic training he bestowed upon her: it is perhaps wonderful that success in either direction should have been the result of such a system; but, upon the whole, the singer seems to have profited more than the woman from it, as might have been expected. Garcia was an incomparable artist, actor, and singer (no such Don Giovanni has ever been heard or seen since), and bestowed upon all his children the finest musical education that ever made great natural gifts available to the utmost to their possessors. I suppose it was from him, too, that Marie derived with her Spanish blood the vehement, uncontrollable nature of which M. de la Forest told me he had witnessed such extraordinary exhibitions in her girlhood. He said she would fly into passions of rage, in which she would set her teeth in the sleeve of her silk gown, and tear and rend

great pieces out of the thick texture as if it were muslin; a test of the strength of those beautiful teeth, as well as of the fury of her passion. She then would fall rigid on the floor, without motion, breath, pulse, or colour, though not fainting, in a sort of catalepsy of rage.

Her marriage with the old French merchant Malibran was speedily followed by their separation; he went to France, leaving his divine devil of a wife in New York, and during his absence she used to write letters to him, which she frequently showed to M. de la Forest, who was her intimate friend and adviser, and took a paternal interest in all her affairs. These epistles often expressed so much cordial kindness and warmth of feeling towards her husband, that M. de la Forest, who knew her separation from him to have been entirely her own act and choice, and any decent agreement and harmonious life between them absolutely impossible, was completely puzzled by such professions towards a man with whom she was determined never to live, and occasionally said to her, "What do you mean? Do you wish your husband to come here to you? or do you contemplate going to him? In short, what is your intention in writing with all this affection to a man from whom you have separated yourself?" Upon this view of her epistle, which did not appear to have struck her, M. de la Forest said, she would (instead of rewriting it) tack on to it, with the most ludicrous inconsistency, a sort of revocatory codicil, in the shape of a postscript, expressing her decided desire that her husband should remain where he was, and her own explicit determina-

tion never again to enter into any more intimate relations with him than were compatible with a correspondence from opposite sides of the Atlantic, whatever personal regard or affection for him her letter might appear to express to the contrary notwithstanding.

To my great regret I only saw her act once, though I heard her sing at concerts and in private repeatedly. My only personal encounter with her took place in a curious fashion. My father and myself were acting at Manchester, and had just finished performing the parts of Mr. and Mrs. Beverley, one night, in "The Gamester." On our return from the theatre, as I was slowly and in considerable exhaustion following my father up the hotel stairs, as we reached the landing by our sitting-room, a door immediately opposite to it flew open, and a lady dressed like Tilburina's Confidante, all in white muslin, rushed out of it, and fell upon my father's breast, sobbing out hysterically, "Oh, Mr. Kembel, my deare, deare Mr. Kembel!" This was Madame Malibran, under the effect of my father's performance of the Gamester, which she had just witnessed. "Come, come," quoth my father (who was old enough to have been hers, and knew her very well), patting her consolingly on the back, "Come now, my dear Madame Malibran, compose yourself; don't now, Marie, don't, my dear child!" all which was taking place on the public staircase, while I looked on in wide-eyed amazement behind. Madame Malibran, having suffered herself to be led into our room, gradually composed herself, ate her supper with us, expressed herself with much kind enthusiasm about my performance, and gave me a word of advice

as to not losing any of my height (of which I had none to spare) by stooping, saying very amiably that, being at a disadvantage as to her own stature, she had never wasted a quarter of an inch of it. This little reflection upon her own proportions must have been meant as a panacea to my vanity for her criticism of my deportment. My person was indeed of the shortest; but she had the figure of a nymph, and was rather above than below middle height. There was in other respects some likeness between us; she was certainly not really handsome, but her eyes were magnificent, and her whole countenance was very striking.

The first time I ever saw her sister, Madame Viardot, she was sitting with mine, who introduced me to her; Pauline Viardot continued talking, now and then, however, stopping to look fixedly at me, and at last exclaimed, "Mais comme elle ressemble à ma Marie!" and one evening at a private concert in London, having arrived late, I remained standing by the folding-doors of the drawing-room, while Lablache finished a song which he had begun before I came in, at the end of which he came up to me, and said, "You cannot think how you frightened me, when first I saw you standing in that doorway; you looked so absolutely like Malibran, que je ne savais en vérité pas ce que c'était." Malibran's appearance was a memorable event in the whole musical world of Europe, throughout which her progress from capital to capital was one uninterrupted triumph; the enthusiasm, as is general in such cases, growing with its further and wider spread, so that at Venice she was allowed, in

spite of old established law and custom, to go about in a gold and crimson gondola, as fine as the Bucentaur itself, instead of the floating hearses that haunt the sea-paved thoroughfares, and that did not please her gay and magnificent taste.

Her *début* in England was an absolute conquest of the nation; and when it was shocked by the news of her untimely death, hundreds of those unsympathetic, unæsthetic, unenthusiastic English people put mourning on for the wonderfully gifted young woman, snatched away in the midst of her brilliant career. Madame Malibran composed some charming songs, but her great reputation derives little of its lustre from them,—that great reputation already a mere tradition.

At a challenge I would not decline, I ventured upon the following harsh and ungraceful but literal translation of some of the stanzas from Alfred de Musset's fine lament for Malibran. My poetical competitor produced an admirable version of them, and has achieved translations of other of his verses, as perfect as translations can be; a literary feat of extraordinary difficulty, with the works of so essentially national a writer, a genius so peculiarly French, as De Musset.

"Oh, Maria Felicia! the painter and bard
Behind them, in dying, leave undying heirs.
The night of oblivion their memory spares,
And their great, eager souls, other action debarred,
Against death, against time, having valiantly warred,
Though struck down in the strife, claim its trophies as theirs.

"In the iron engraved, one his thought leaves enshrined;
With a golden-sweet cadence another's entwined
Makes for ever all those who shall hear it his friends.
Though he died, on the canvas lives Raphael's mind;
And from death's darkest doom till this world of ours ends,
The mother-clasped infant his glory defends.

"As the lamp guards the flame, so the bare, marble halls
Of the Parthenon keep, in their desolate space,
The memory of Phidias enshrined in their walls.
And Praxiteles' child, the young Venus, yet calls
From the altar, where, smiling, she still holds her place,
The centuries conquered, to worship her grace.

"Thus from age after age, while new life they receive,
To rest at God's feet the old glories are gone;
And the accents of genius their echoes still weave
With the great human voice, till their speech is but one.
And of thee, dead but yesterday, all thy fame leaves
But a cross in the dim chapel's darkness, alone.

"A cross and oblivion, silence, and death!
Hark! the wind's softest sob; hark! the ocean's deep breath!
Hark! the fisher-boy singing his way o'er the plains!
Of thy glory, thy hope, thy young beauty's bright wreath,
Not a trace, not a sigh, not an echo remains."

Those Garcia sisters were among the most remarkable people of their day, not only for their peculiar high artistic gifts, their admirable musical and dramatic powers, but for the vivid originality of their genius and great general cultivation. Malibran danced almost as well as she sang, and once took a principal part in a ballet. She drew and painted well, as did her sister Pauline Viardot, whose spirited caricatures of her friends and herself were admirable specimens both of likenesses and of humor-

ous talent in delineating them. Both sisters conversed brilliantly, speaking fluently four languages, and executed the music of different nations and composers with a perception of the peculiar character of each that was extraordinary. They were mistresses of all the different schools of religious, dramatic, and national compositions, and Gluck, Jomelli, Pergolesi, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Rossini, Bellini, Scotch and Irish melodies, Neapolitan canzonette, and the popular airs of their own country, were all rendered by them with equal mastery.

To resume my story (which is very like that of the knife-grinder). When I returned to the stage, many years after I had first appeared on it, I restored the beautiful end of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" as he wrote it (in spite of Garrick and the original story), thinking it mere profanation to intrude sharp discords of piercing agony into the divine harmony of woe with which it closes.

"Thus with a kiss I die,"
"Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead,"

are full enough of bitter-sweet despair for the last chords of that ineffable, passionate strain—the swoon of sorrow ending that brief, palpitating ecstasy, the proper, dirge-like close to that triumphant hymn of love and youth and beauty. All the frantic rushing and tortured writhing and uproar of noisy anguish of the usual stage ending seemed utter desecration to me; but Garrick was an actor, the first of actors, and his death-scene of the lovers and ending of the play is much more theatrically effective than Shakespeare's.

The report of my approaching appearance on the stage excited a good deal of interest among the acquaintances and friends of my family, and occasioned a renewal of cordial relations which had formerly existed, but ceased for some time, between Sir Thomas Lawrence and my father and mother.

Lawrence's enthusiastic admiration for my uncle John and Mrs. Siddons, testified by the numerous striking portraits in which he has recorded their personal beauty and dramatic picturesqueness, led to a most intimate and close friendship between the great painter and the eminent actors, and, subsequently, to very painful circumstances, which estranged him for years from all our family, and forbade all renewal of the relations between himself and Mrs. Siddons which had been so cruelly interrupted.

While frequenting her house upon terms of the most affectionate intimacy, he proposed to her eldest daughter, my cousin Sarah, and was accepted by her. Before long, however, he became deeply dejected, moody, restless, and evidently extremely and unaccountably wretched. Violent scenes of the most painful emotion, of which the cause was inexplicable and incomprehensible, took place repeatedly between himself and Mrs. Siddons, to whom he finally, in a paroxysm of self-abandoned misery, confessed that he had mistaken his own feelings, and that her younger daughter, and not the elder, was the real object of his affection, and ended by imploring permission to transfer his addresses from the one to the other sister. How this most extraordinary change was accom-

plished I know not; but only that it took place, and that Maria Siddons became engaged to her sister's faithless lover. To neither of them, however, was he destined ever to be united; they were both exceedingly delicate young women, with a tendency to consumption, which was probably developed and accelerated in its progress in no small measure by all the bitterness and complicated difficulties of this disastrous double courtship.

Maria, the youngest, an exceedingly beautiful girl, died first, and on her death-bed exacted from her sister a promise that she would never become Lawrence's wife; the promise was given, and she died, and had not lain long in her untimely grave when her sister was laid in it beside her. The death of these two lovely and amiable women broke off all connection between Sir Thomas Lawrence and my aunt, and from that time they never saw or had any intercourse with each other.

CHAPTER II.

It was years after these events that Lawrence, meeting my father accidentally in the street one day, stopped him and spoke with great feeling of his sympathy for us all in my approaching trial, and begged permission to come and see my mother and become acquainted with me, which he accordingly did; and from that time till his death, which occurred but a few months later, he was unwearied in acts of friendly and affectionate kindness to me. He came repeatedly to consult with my mother about the disputed point of my dress, and gave his sanction to her decision upon it. The first dress of Belvidera, I remember, was a point of nice discussion between them. Plain black velvet and a lugubrious long veil were considered my only admissible wear, after my husband's ruin; but before the sale of our furniture, it was conceded that I might relieve the sombre Venetian patrician's black dress with white satin puffs and crimson linings and rich embroidery of gold and pearl; moreover, before our bankruptcy, I was allowed (not, however, without serious demur on the part of Lawrence) to cover my head with a black hat and white feather, with which, of course, I was enamoured, having never

worn anything but my hair on my head before, and feeling an unspeakable accession of dignity in this piece of attire. I begged hard to be allowed to wear it through the tragedy, but this, with some laughter at my intense desire for it, was forbidden, and I was reduced after the first scene of the play to my own unadorned locks, which I think greatly strengthened my feeling of the abject misery into which I had fallen.

When in town, Lawrence never omitted one of my performances, always occupying the stage box, and invariably sending me the next morning a letter, full of the most detailed and delicate criticism, showing a minute attention to every inflection of my voice, every gesture, every attitude, which, combined with expressions of enthusiastic admiration, with which this discriminating and careful review of my performance invariably terminated, was as strong a dose of the finest flattery as could well have been offered to a girl of my age, on the very first step of her artistic career. I used to read over the last of these remarkable criticisms, invariably, before going to the theatre, in order to profit by every suggestion of alteration or hint of improvement they contained; and I was in the act of reperusing the last I ever received from him, when my father came in and said, "Lawrence is dead."

I had been sitting to him for some time previously for a pencil sketch, which he gave my mother; it was his last work, and certainly the most beautiful of his drawings. He had appointed a day for beginning a full-length, life-size portrait of me as Juliet, and we

had seen him only a week before his death, and, in the interval, received a note from him, merely saying he was rather indisposed. His death, which was quite unexpected, created a very great public sensation, and there was something sufficiently mysterious about its circumstances to give rise to a report that he had committed suicide.

The shock of this event was terrible to me, although I have sometimes since thought it was fortunate for me rather than otherwise. Sir Thomas Lawrence's enthusiastically expressed admiration for me, his constant kindness, his sympathy in my success, and the warm interest he took in everything that concerned me, might only have inspired me with a grateful sense of his condescension and goodness. But I was a very romantic girl, with a most excitable imagination, and such was to me the melancholy charm of Lawrence's countenance, the elegant distinction of his person, and exquisite refined gentleness of his voice and manner, that a very dangerous fascination was added to my sense of gratitude for all his personal kindness to me, and my admiration for his genius; and I think it not at all unlikely that, had our intercourse continued, and had I sat to him for the projected portrait of Juliet, in spite of the forty years' difference in our ages, and my knowledge of his disastrous relations with my cousins, I should have become in love with him myself, and been the fourth member of our family whose life he would have disturbed and embittered. His sentimentality was of a peculiarly mischievous order, as it not only induced women to fall in love with him, but enabled him to persuade himself that

he was in love with them, and apparently with more than one at a time.

While I was sitting to him for the beautiful sketch he gave my mother, one or two little incidents occurred that illustrated curiously enough this superficial pseudo-sensibility of his. On one occasion, when he spent the evening with us, my mother had made me sing for him; and the next day, after my sitting, he said in a strange, hesitating, broken manner, as if struggling to control some strong emotion, "I have a very great favour to beg of you; the next time I have the honour and pleasure of spending the evening with you, will you, if Mrs. Kemble does not disapprove of it, sing this song for me?" He put a piece of music into my hand, and immediately left us without another word. On our way home in the carriage, I unrolled the song, the title of which was "These few pale Autumn Flowers." "Ha!" said my mother, with, I thought, rather a peculiar expression, as I read the words; but she added no further comment. Both words and music were plaintive and pathetic, and had an original stamp in the melancholy they expressed.

The next time Lawrence spent the evening with us I sang the song for him. While I did so, he stood by the piano in a state of profound abstraction, from which he recovered himself, as if coming back from very far away, and with an expression of acute pain on his countenance, to thank me repeatedly for what he called the great favour I had done him.

At the end of my next sitting, when my mother and myself had risen to take leave of him, he said, "No, don't go yet,—stay a moment,—I want to show you

something—if I can;" and he moved restlessly about, taking up and putting down his chalks and pencils, and standing, and sitting down again, as if unable to make up his mind to do what he wished. At length he went abruptly to an easel, and, removing from it a canvas with a few slight sketches on it, he discovered behind it the profile portrait of a lady in a white dress folded simply across her bosom, and showing her beautiful neck and shoulders. Her head was dressed with a sort of sibylline turban, and she supported it upon a most lovely hand and arm, her elbow resting on a large book, towards which she bent, and on the pages of which her eyes were fixed, the exquisite eyelid and lashes hiding the eyes. "Oh, how beautiful! oh, who is it!" exclaimed I. "A—a lady," stammered Lawrence, turning white and red, "towards whom—for whom—I entertained the profoundest regard." Thereupon he fled out of the room. "It is the portrait of Mrs. W——," said my mother; "she is now dead; she was an exceedingly beautiful and accomplished woman, the authoress of the words and music of the song Sir Thomas Lawrence asked you to learn for him."

The great painter's devotion to this lovely person had been matter of notoriety in the London world. Strangely enough, but a very short time ago I discovered that she was the kinswoman of my friend Miss Cobbe's mother, of whom Miss Cobbe possessed a miniature, in which the fashion of dress and style of head-dress were the same as those in the picture I saw, and in which I also traced some resemblance to the beautiful face which made so great an impression on

me. Not long after this Mrs. Siddons, dining with us one day, asked my mother how the sketch Lawrence was making of me was getting on. After my mother's reply, my aunt remained silent for some time, and then, laying her hand on my father's arm, said, "Charles, when I die, I wish to be carried to my grave by you and Lawrence." Lawrence reached his grave while she was yet tottering on the brink of hers.

After my next sitting, my mother, thinking he might be gratified by my aunt's feeling towards him, mentioned her having dined with us. He asked eagerly of her health, her looks, her words, and my mother telling him of her speech about him, he threw down his pencil, clasped his hands, and, with his eyes full of tears and his face convulsed, exclaimed, "Good God! did she say that?"

When my likeness was finished, Lawrence showed it to my mother, who, though she had attended all my sittings, had never seen it till it was completed. As she stood silently looking at it, he said, "What strikes you? what do you think?" "It is very like Maria," said my mother, almost involuntarily, I am sure, for immediately this strange man fell into one of these paroxysms of emotion, and became so agitated as scarcely to be able to speak; and at last, with a violent effort, said, "Oh, she is very like her; she is very like them all!"

In spite of these emotions which I heard and saw Sir Thomas Lawrence express, I know positively that at his death a lady, who had been an intimate acquaintance of our family for many years, put on

widow's weeds for him, in the full persuasion that had he lived he would have married her, and that the mutual regard they entertained for each other warranted her assuming the deepest mourning for him. Not the least curious part of the emotional demonstrations I have described, was the contrast which they formed to Sir Thomas Lawrence's habitual demeanour, which was polished and refined, but reserved to a degree of coldness, and as indicative of reticent discretion and imperturbable self-control as became a man who lived in such high social places, and frequented the palaces of royalty and the boudoirs of the great rival beauties of the English aristocracy.

On my twentieth birthday, which occurred soon after my first appearance, Lawrence sent me a magnificent proof-plate of Reynold's portrait of my aunt as the "Tragic Muse," beautifully framed, and with this inscription: "This portrait, by England's greatest painter, of the noblest subject of his pencil, is presented to her niece and worthy successor, by her most faithful humble friend and servant, Lawrence." When my mother saw this, she exclaimed at it, and said, "I am surprised he ever brought himself to write those words—her 'worthy successor.'" A few days after, Lawrence begged me to let him have the print again, as he was not satisfied with the finishing of the frame. It was sent to him, and when it came back he had effaced the words in which he had admitted *any* worthy successor to his "Tragic Muse;" and Mr. H——, who was at that time his secretary, told me that Lawrence had the print lying with that inscription in his drawing-room for several days before send-

ing it to me, and had said to him, "Cover it up; I cannot bear to look at it."

One day, at the end of my sitting, Lawrence showed me a lovely portrait of Mrs. Inchbald, of whom my mother, as we drove home, told me a number of amusing anecdotes. She was very beautiful, and gifted with original genius, as her plays and farces and novels (above all, the "Simple Story") testify; she was not an actress of any special merit, but of respectable mediocrity. She stuttered habitually, but her delivery was never impeded by this defect on the stage; a curious circumstance, not uncommon to persons who have that infirmity, and who can read and recite without suffering from it, though quite unable to speak fluently. Mrs. Inchbald was a person of a very remarkable character, lovely, poor, with unusual mental powers and of irreproachable conduct. Her life was devoted to the care of some dependent relation, who from sickness was incapable of self-support. Mrs. Inchbald had a singular uprightness and unworldliness, and a childlike directness and simplicity of manner, which, combined with her personal loveliness and halting, broken utterance, gave to her conversation, which was both humorous and witty, a most peculiar and comical charm. Once, after travelling all day in a pouring rain, on alighting at her inn, the coachman, dripping all over with wet, offered his arm to help her out of the coach, when she exclaimed, to the great amusement of her fellow-travellers, "Oh no, no! y-y-y-you will give me m-m-m-my death of c-c-c-cold; do bring me a-a-a-a *dry* man." An aristocratic neighbour of hers, with whom she was

slightly acquainted, driving with his daughter in the vicinity of her very humble suburban residence, overtook her walking along the road one very hot day, and, stopping his carriage, asked her to let him have the pleasure of taking her home; when she instantly declined, with the characteristic excuse that she had just come from the market gardener's: "And, my lord, I-I-I have my pocket f-f-full of onions,"—an unsophisticated statement of facts which made them laugh extremely. At the first reading of one of her pieces, a certain young lady, with rather a lean, lanky figure being proposed to her for the part of the heroine, she indignantly exclaimed, "No, no, no; I-I-I-I won't have that s-s-s-stick of a girl! D-d-d-do give me a-a-a girl with *bumps!*" Coming off the stage one evening, she was about to sit down by Mrs. Siddons in the green-room, when suddenly, looking at her magnificent neighbour, she said, "No, I won't s-s-s-sit by you; you're t-t-t-too handsome!"—in which respect she certainly need have feared no competition, and less with my aunt than any one, their style of beauty being so absolutely dissimilar. Somebody speaking of having oysters for supper, much surprise was excited by Mrs. Inchbald's saying that she had never eaten one. Questions and remonstrances, exclamations of astonishment, and earnest advice to enlarge her experience in that respect, assailed her from the whole green-room, when she finally delivered herself thus: "Oh no, indeed! I-I-I-I never, never could! What! e-e-e-eat the eyes and t-t-t-the nose, the teeth a-a-a-nd the toes, the a-a-a-all of a creature!" She was an enthusiastic admirer of my uncle John, and the hero of her

"Simple Story," Doriforth, is supposed to have been intended by her as a portrait of him. On one occasion, when she was sitting by the fireplace in the green-room, waiting to be called upon the stage, she and Miss Mellon (afterwards Mrs. Coutts and Duchess of St. Albans) were laughingly discussing their male friends and acquaintances from the matrimonial point of view. My uncle John, who was standing near, excessively amused, at length jestingly said to Mrs. Inchbald, who had been comically energetic in her declarations of who she could or would, or never could or would, have married, "Well, Mrs. Inchbald, would you have had me?" "Dear heart!" said the stammering beauty, turning her sweet, sunny face up to him, "I'd have j-j-j-jumped at you!"

One day Lawrence took us, from the room where I generally sat to him, into a long gallery where were a number of his pictures, and, leading me by the hand, desired me not to raise my eyes till he told me. On the word of command I looked up, and found myself standing close to and immediately underneath, as it were, a colossal figure of Satan. The sudden shock of finding myself in such proximity to this terrible image made me burst into nervous tears. Lawrence was greatly distressed at the result of his experiment, which had been simply to obtain a verdict from my unprepared impression of the power of his picture. A conversation we had been having upon the subject of Milton and the character of Satan had made him think of showing this picture to me. I was too much agitated to form any judgment of it, but I thought I perceived through its fierce and

tragical expression some trace of my uncle's face and features, a sort of "more so" of the bitter pride and scornful melancholy of the banished Roman in the Volscian Hall. Lawrence's imagination was so filled with the poetical and dramatic suggestions which he derived from the Kemble brother and sister, that I thought a likeness of them lurked in this portrait of the Prince of Darkness; and perhaps he could scarcely have found a better model for his arch-fiend than my uncle, to whom his mother occasionally addressed the characteristic reproof, "Sir, you are as proud as Lucifer!" (He and that remarkable mother of his must really have been a good deal like Coriolanus and Volumnia.) To console me for the fright he had given me, Lawrence took me into his drawing-room—that beautiful apartment filled with beautiful things, including his magnificent collection of original drawings by the old masters, and precious gems of old and modern art—the treasure-house of all the exquisite objects of beauty and curiosity that he had gathered together during his whole life, and that (with the exception of Raphael's and Michael Angelo's drawings, now in the museum at Oxford) were so soon, at his most unexpected death, to be scattered abroad and become, in separate, disjointed portions, the property of a hundred different purchasers. Here, he said, he hoped often to persuade my father and mother and myself to pass our unengaged evenings with him; here he should like to make my brother John, of whom I had spoken enthusiastically to him, free of his art collections; and, adding that he would write to my mother to fix the day for my

first sitting for Juliet, he put into my hands a copy of the first edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost." I never entered that room or his house, or saw him again; he died about ten days after that.

Lawrence did not talk much while he took his sketch of me, and I remember very little that passed between him and my mother but what was purely personal. I recollect he told me that I had a double row of eyelashes, which was an unusual peculiarity. He expressed the most decided preference for satin over every other material for painting, expatiating rapturously on the soft, rich folds and infinitely varied lights and shadows which that texture afforded above all others. He has dressed a great many of his female portraits in white satin. He also once said that he had been haunted at one time with the desire to paint a blush, that most enchanting "incident" in the expression of a woman's face, but, after being driven nearly wild with the ineffectual endeavour, had had to renounce it, never, of course, he said, achieving anything but a *red face*. I remember the dreadful impression made upon me by a story he told my mother of Lady J—— (George the Fourth's Lady J——), who, standing before her drawing-room looking-glass, and unaware that he was in the rooms, apostrophized her own reflection with this reflection: "I swear it would be better to go to hell at once than live to grow old and ugly."

Lawrence once said that we never dreamed of ourselves as younger than we were; that even if our dreams reproduced scenes and people and circumstances of our youth and childhood we were always

represented, by our sleeping imagination, at our present age. I presume he spoke of his own experience, and I cannot say that I recollect any instance in mine that contradicts this theory. It seems curious, if it is true, that in the manifold freaks of our sleeping fancy self-consciousness should still exist to a sufficient degree to preserve unaltered one's own conditions of age and physical appearance. I wonder whether this is really the common experience of people's dreams? Frederick Maurice told me a circumstance in curious opposition to this theory of Lawrence's. A young woman whom he knew, of more than usual mental and moral endowments, married a man very much her inferior in mind and character, and appeared to him to deteriorate gradually but very perceptibly under his influence. "As the husband is, the wife is," etc. Towards the middle of her life she told him that at one time she had carried on a double existence in her sleeping and waking hours, her dreams invariably taking her back to the home and period of her girlhood, and that she resumed this dream-life precisely where she left it off, night after night, for a considerable period of time,—poor thing!—perhaps as long as the roots of the young nobler self survived below the soil of a baser present existence. This story seemed to me always very pathetic. It must have been dismal to lose that dream-life by degrees, as the real one ate more and more into her nature.

Of Lawrence's merit as a painter an unduly favourable estimate was taken during his life, and since his death his reputation has suffered an undue deprecia-

tion. Much that he did partook of the false and bad style which, from the deeper source of degraded morality, spread a taint over all matters of art and taste, under the vicious influence of the "first gentleman of Europe," whose own artistic preferences bore witness, quite as much as the more serious events of his life, how little he deserved the name. Hideous Chinese pagoda pavilions, with grotesque and monstrous decorations, barbarous alike in form and in colour; mean and ugly low-roomed royal palaces, without either magnificence or simplicity; military costumes, in which gold and silver lace were plastered together on the same uniform, testified to the perverted perception of beauty and fitness which presided in the court of George the Fourth. Lawrence's own portrait of him, with his corpulent body girthed in his stays and creaseless coat, and his heavy falling cheeks supported by his stiff stock, with his dancing-master's leg and his frizzled barber's-block head, comes as near a caricature as a flattered likeness of the original (which was a caricature) dares to do. To have had to paint that was enough to have vulgarized any pencil. The defect of many of Lawrence's female portraits was a sort of artificial, sentimental *elegantism*. Pictures of the fine ladies of that day they undoubtedly were, pictures of *great* ladies, never; and, in looking at them, one sighed for the exquisite simple grace and unaffected dignity of Reynolds's and Gainsborough's noble and gentle women.

The lovely head of Lady Nugent, the fine portrait I have mentioned of Mrs. W——, the splendid one of Lady Hatherton, and the noble picture of my grand-

mother, are among the best productions of Lawrence's pencil; and several of his men's portraits are in a robust and simple style of art worthy of the highest admiration. His likeness of Canning (which, by-the-by, might have passed for his own, so great was his resemblance to the brilliant statesman) and the fine portrait he painted for Lord Aberdeen, of my uncle John, are excellent specimens of his best work. He had a remarkable gift of producing likenesses at once striking and favourable, and of always seizing the finest expression of which a face was capable; and none could ever complain that Lawrence had not done justice to the very best look they ever wore. Lawrence's want of conscience with regard to the pictures which he undertook and never finished, is difficult to account for by any plausible explanation. The fact is notorious, that in various instances, after receiving the price of a portrait, and beginning it, he procrastinated, and delayed, and postponed the completion, until, in more than one case, the blooming beauty sketched upon his canvas had grown faded and wrinkled before the image of her youthful loveliness had been completed.

The renewal of intercourse between Lawrence and my parents, so soon to be terminated by his death, was the cause to me of a loss which I shall never cease to regret. My father had had in his library for years (indeed, as long as I remember) a large volume of fine engravings of the masterpieces of the great Italian painters, and this precious book of art we were occasionally allowed to look at for an hour of rare delight; but it belonged to Sir Thomas Lawrence,

and had accidentally been kept for this long space of time in my father's possession. One of my mother's first acts, on again entering into friendly relations with Lawrence, was to restore this piece of property to him; a precipitate act of honesty which I could not help deploring, especially when, so soon after this deed of rash restitution, his death brought those beautiful engravings, with all the rest of his property, to the hammer.

There is no early impression stronger in my mind than that of some of those masterpieces, which, together with Winckelmann's fine work on classical art (our familiarity with which I have elsewhere alluded to), were among the first influences of the sort which I experienced. Nor can I ever be too grateful that, restricted as were my parents' means of developing in us the highest culture, they were still such as, combined with their own excellent taste and judgment, preserved us from that which is far worse than ignorance, a liking for anything vulgar or trivial. That which was merely pretty, in music, painting, or poetry, was never placed on the same level in our admiration with that which was fine; and though, from nature as well as training, we enjoyed with great zest everything that could in any sense be called good, our enthusiasm was always reserved for that which was best, an incalculable advantage in the formation of a fine taste and critical judgment. A noble ideal beauty was what we were taught to consider the proper object and result of all art. In their especial vocation this tendency caused my family to be accused of formalism and artificial pedantry; and

the so-called "classical" school of acting, to which they belonged, has frequently since their time been unfavourably compared with what, by way of contrast, has been termed the realistic or natural style of art. I do not care to discuss the question, but am thankful that my education preserved me from accepting mere imitation of nature as art, on the stage or in the picture gallery; and that, without destroying my delight in any kind of beauty, it taught me a decided preference for that which was highest and noblest.

All being in due preparation for my coming out, my rehearsals were the only interruption to my usual habits of occupation, which I pursued very steadily in spite of my impending trial. On the day of my first appearance I had no rehearsal, for fear of over-fatigue, and spent my morning as usual, in practising the piano, walking in the inclosure of St. James's Park opposite our house, and reading in "Blunt's Scripture Characters" (a book in which I was then deeply interested) the chapters relating to St. Peter and Jacob. I do not know whether the nervous tension which I must have been enduring strengthened the impression made upon me by what I read, but I remember being quite absorbed by it, which I think was curious, because certainly such subjects of meditation were hardly allied to the painful undertaking so immediately pressing upon me. But I believe I felt imperatively the necessity of moderating my own strong nervous emotion and excitement by the fulfilment of my accustomed duties and pursuits, and above all by withdrawing my mind into higher and serener regions of thought, as a respite and relief

from the pressure of my alternate apprehensions of failure and hopes of success. I do not mean that it was at all a matter of deliberate calculation or reflection, but rather an instinct of self-preservation, which actuated me: a powerful instinct which has struggled and partially prevailed throughout my whole life against the irregular and passionate vehemence of my temperament, and which, in spite of a constant tendency to violent excitement of mind and feeling, has made me a person of unusually systematic pursuits and monotonous habits, and been a frequent subject of astonishment, not unmixed with ridicule, to my friends, who have not known as well as myself what wholesomeness there was in the method of my madness. And I am persuaded that religion and reason alike justify such a strong instinctive action in natures which derive a constant moral support, like that of the unobserved but all-sustaining pressure of the atmosphere, from the soothing and restraining influence of systematic habits of monotonous regularity. Amid infinite anguish and errors, existence may preserve a species of outward symmetry and harmony from this strong band of minute observance keeping down and assisting the mind to master elements of moral and mental discord and disorder, for the due control of which the daily and hourly subjection to recurring rules is an invaluable auxiliary to higher influences. The external practice does not supply, but powerfully supplements the internal principle of self-control.

My mother, who had left the stage for upwards of twenty years, determined to return to it on the night

of my first appearance, that I might have the comfort and support of her being with me in my trial. We drove to the theatre very early, indeed while the late autumn sunlight yet lingered in the sky; it shone into the carriage upon me, and as I screened my eyes from it, my mother said, "Heaven smiles on you, my child." My poor mother went to her dressing-room to get herself ready, and did not return to me for fear of increasing my agitation by her own. My dear aunt Dall and my maid and the theatre dresser performed my toilet for me, and at length I was placed in a chair, with my satin train carefully laid over the back of it; and there I sat, ready for execution, with the palms of my hands pressed convulsively together, and the tears I in vain endeavoured to repress welling up into my eyes and brimming slowly over, down my rouged cheeks,—upon which my aunt, with a smile full of pity, renewed the colour as often as these heavy drops made unsightly streaks in it. Once and again my father came to the door, and I heard his anxious "How is she?" to which my aunt answered, sending him away with words of comforting cheer. At last, "Miss Kemble called for the stage, ma'am!" accompanied with a brisk tap at the door, started me upright on my feet, and I was led round to the side scene opposite to the one from which I saw my mother advance on the stage; and while the uproar of her reception filled me with terror, dear old Mrs. Davenport, my nurse, and dear Mr. Keely, her Peter, and half the *dramatis personæ* of the play (but not my father, who had retreated, quite unable to endure the scene) stood round me as I lay, all but insensible,

in my aunt's arms. "Courage, courage, dear child! poor thing, poor thing!" reiterated Mrs. Davenport. "Never mind 'em, Miss Kemble!" urged Keely, in that irresistibly comical, nervous, lachrymose voice of his, which I have never since heard without a thrill of anything but comical association; "never mind 'em! don't think of 'em, any more than if they were so many rows of cabbages!" "Nurse!" called my mother, and on waddled Mrs. Davenport, and, turning back, called in her turn, "Juliet!" My aunt gave me an impulse forward, and I ran straight across the stage, stunned with the tremendous shout that greeted me, my eyes covered with mist, and the green baize flooring of the stage feeling as if it rose up against my feet; but I got hold of my mother, and stood like a terrified creature at bay, confronting the huge theatre full of gazing human beings. I do not think a word I uttered during this scene could have been audible; in the next, the ball-room, I began to forget myself; in the following one, the balcony scene, I had done so, and, for aught I knew, I was Juliet; the passion I was uttering sending hot waves of blushes all over my neck and shoulders, while the poetry sounded like music to me as I spoke it, with no consciousness of anything before me, utterly transported into the imaginary existence of the play. After this, I did not return into myself till all was over, and amid a tumultuous storm of applause, congratulation, tears, embraces, and a general joyous explosion of unutterable relief at the fortunate termination of my attempt, we went home. And so my life was determined, and I devoted myself to an

avocation which I never liked or honoured, and about the very nature of which I have never been able to come to any decided opinion. It is in vain that the undoubted specific gifts of great actors and actresses suggest that all gifts are given for rightful exercise, and not suppression; in vain that Shakespeare's plays urge their imperative claim to the most perfect illustration they can receive from histrionic interpretation: a *business* which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man; a business which is public exhibition, unworthy of a woman.

At four different periods of my life I have been constrained by circumstances to maintain myself by the exercise of my dramatic faculty; latterly, it is true, in a less painful and distasteful manner, by reading, instead of acting. But though I have never, I trust, been ungrateful for the power of thus helping myself and others, or forgetful of the obligation I was under to do my appointed work conscientiously in every respect, or unmindful of the precious good regard of so many kind hearts that it has won for me; though I have never lost one iota of my own intense delight in the act of rendering Shakespeare's creations; yet neither have I ever presented myself before an audience without a shrinking feeling of reluctance, or withdrawn from their presence without thinking the excitement I had undergone unhealthy, and the personal exhibition odious.

Nevertheless, I sat me down to supper that night with my poor, rejoicing parents well content, God knows! with the issue of my trial; and still better pleased with a lovely little Geneva watch, the first I had ever

possessed, all encrusted with gold work and jewels, which my father laid by my plate and I immediately christened Romeo, and went, a blissful girl, to sleep with it under my pillow.

Buckingham Gate, James Street, December 14th.

DEAREST ——,

I received your letter this morning, before I was out of my room, and very glad I was to get it. You would have heard from me again ere this, had it not been that, in your present anxious state of mind respecting your brother, I did not like to demand your attention for my proceedings. My trial is over, and, thank Heaven! most fortunately. Our most sanguine wishes could hardly have gone beyond the result, and at the same time that I hail my success as a source of great happiness to my dear father and mother, I almost venture to hope that the interest which has been excited in the public may tend to revive once more the decaying dramatic art. You say it is a very fascinating occupation; perhaps it is, though it does not appear to me so, and I think it carries with it drawbacks enough to operate as an antidote to the vanity and love of admiration which it can hardly fail to foster. The mere embodying of the exquisite ideals of poetry is a great enjoyment, but after that, or rather *for* that, comes in ours, as in all arts, the mechanical process, the labour, the refining, the controlling the very feeling one has, in order to manifest it in the best way to the perception of others; and when all, that intense feeling and careful work can accomplish, is done, an actor must

often see those points of his performance which are most worthy of approbation overlooked, and others, perhaps crude in taste or less true in feeling, commended; which must tend much, I think, to sober the mind as to the value of applause. Above all, the constant consciousness of the immeasurable distance between a fine conception and the best execution of it, must in acting, as in all art, be a powerful check to vanity and self-satisfaction.

As to the mere excitement proceeding from the public applause of a theatre, I am sure you will believe me when I say I do not think I shall ever experience it. But should I reckon too much upon my own steadiness, I have the incessant care and watchfulness of my dear mother to rely on, and I do rely on it as an invaluable safeguard, both to the purity and good taste of all that I may do on the stage, and the quiet and soberness of my mind under all this new excitement. She has borne all her anxieties wonderfully well, and I now hope she will reap some repayment for them. My dear father is very happy; indeed, we have all cause for heartfelt thankfulness when we think what a light has dawned upon our prospects, lately so dismal and overcast. My own motto in all this must be, as far as possible, "Beget a temperance in all things." I trust I shall be enabled to rule myself by it, and in the firm hope that my endeavour to do what is right will be favoured and assisted, I have committed myself, nothing doubting, to the stormy sea of life. Dearest H——, the papers will give you a detailed account of my *début;* I only wish to assure you that I have not

embraced this course without due dread of its dangers, and a firm determination to watch, as far as in me lies, over its effect upon my mind. It is, after all, but lately, you know, that I have become convinced that fame and gratified ambition are not the worthiest aims for one's exertions. With affectionate love, believe me ever your fondly attached

FANNY.

I most sincerely hope that your brother's health is improving, and if we do not meet sooner, I shall now look forward to Dublin as our *point de réunion;* that will not be the least of the obligations I shall owe this happy turn of affairs.

I do not know whence I derived the deep impression I expressed in this letter of the moral dangers of the life upon which I was entering; certainly not from my parents, to whom, of course, the idea that actors and actresses could not be respectable people naturally did not occur, and who were not troubled, I am sure, as I then was, with a perception of the more subtle evils of their calling. I had never heard the nature of it discussed, and was absolutely without experience of it, but the vapid vacuity of the last years of my aunt Siddons's life had made a profound impression upon me,—her apparent deadness and indifference to everything, which I attributed (unjustly, perhaps) less to her advanced age and impaired powers than to what I supposed the withering and drying influence of the overstimulating atmosphere of emotion, excitement, and admiration in which she had passed her life; certain it is that such was my dread of the effect of

my profession upon me, that I added an earnest petition to my daily prayers that I might be defended from the evil influence I feared it might exercise upon me.

As for my success, there was, I believe, a genuine element in it, for puffing can send upwards only things that have a buoyant, rising quality in themselves; but there was also a great feeling of personal sympathy for my father and mother, of kindly indulgence for my youth, and of respectful recollection of my uncle and aunt; and a very general desire that the fine theatre where they had exercised their powers should be rescued, if possible, from its difficulties. All this went to make up a result of which I had the credit.

Among my experiences of that nauseous ingredient in theatrical life, puffery, some have been amusing enough. The last time that I gave public readings in America, the management of them was undertaken by a worthy, respectable person, who was not, I think, exceptionally addicted to the devices and charlatanism which appear almost inseparable from the business of public exhibition in all its branches. At the end of our first interview for the purpose of arranging my performances, as he was taking his leave he said, "Well, ma'am, I think everything is quite in a nice train. I should say things are in a most favourable state of preparation; we've a delightful article coming out in the ——." Here he mentioned a popular periodical. "Ah, indeed?" said I, not quite apprehending what my friend was aiming at. "Yes, really, ma'am, I should say first-rate, and I thought perhaps we might induce you to be good enough to

help us a little with it." "Bless me!" said I, more and more puzzled, "how can I help you?" "Well, ma'am, with a few personal anecdotes, perhaps, if you would be so kind." "Anecdotes?" said I (with three points of interrogation). "What do you mean? What about?" "Why, ma'am" (with a low bow), "about Mrs. Kemble, of course." Now, my worthy agent's remuneration was to consist of a certain proportion of the receipts of the readings, and, that being the case, I felt I had no right absolutely to forbid him all puffing advertisements and decently legitimate efforts to attract public attention and interest to performances by which he was to benefit. At the same time, I also felt it imperatively necessary that there should be some limit to these proceedings, if I was to be made a party to them. I therefore told him that, as his interest was involved in the success of the readings, I could not forbid his puffing them to some extent, as, if I did, he might consider himself injured. "But," said I, while refusing the contribution of any personal anecdotes to his forthcoming article, "take care what you do in that line, for if you overdo it in the least, I will write an article, myself, on my readings, showing up all their faults, and turning them into ridicule as I do not believe any one else either would or could. So puff just as quietly as you can." I rather think my agent left me with the same opinion of my competency in business that Mr. Macready had expressed as to my proficiency in my profession, namely, that "I did not know the rudiments of it."

Mr. Mitchell, who from the first took charge of all

my readings in England, and was the very kindest, most considerate, and most courteous of all managers, on one occasion, complaining bitterly to my sister of the unreasonable objection I had to all laudatory advertisements of my readings, said to her, with a voice and countenance of the most rueful melancholy, and with the most appealing pathos, "Why, you know, ma'am, it's really dreadful; you know, Mrs. Kemble won't even allow us to say in the bills, *these celebrated readings;* and you know, ma'am, it's really impossible to do with less; indeed it is! Why, ma'am, you know even Morrison's pills are always advertised as *these celebrated pills!*"—an illustration of the hardships of his case which my sister repeated to me with infinite delight.

When I saw the shop-windows full of Lawrence's sketch of me, and knew myself the subject of almost daily newspaper notices; when plates and saucers were brought to me with small figures of me as Juliet and Belvidera on them; and finally, when gentlemen showed me lovely buff-coloured neck-handkerchiefs which they had bought, and which had, as I thought, pretty lilac-coloured flowers all over them, which proved on nearer inspection to be minute copies of Lawrence's head of me, I not unnaturally, in the fulness of my inexperience, believed in my own success.

I have since known more of the manufacture of public enthusiasm and public triumphs, and, remembering to how many people it was a matter of vital importance that the public interest should be kept alive in me, and Covent Garden filled every night

I played, I have become more sceptical upon the subject.

Seeing lately a copy of my play of "Francis the First," with (to my infinite astonishment) "tenth edition" upon it, I said to a friend, "I suppose this was a bit of bookseller's puffery; or did each edition consist of three copies?" He replied, "Oh no, I think not; you have forgotten the *furor* there was about you when this came out." At twenty I believed it *all;* at sixty-eight I find it difficult to believe *any* of it.

It is certain, however, that I played Juliet upwards of a hundred and twenty times running, with all the irregularity and unevenness and immature inequality of which I have spoken as characteristics which were never corrected in my performances. My mother, who never missed one of them, would sometimes come down from her box and, folding me in her arms, say only the very satisfactory words, "Beautiful, my dear!" Quite as often, if not oftener, the verdict was, "My dear, your performance was not fit to be seen! I don't know how you ever contrived to do the part decently; it must have been by some knack or trick which you appear to have entirely lost the secret of; you had better give the whole thing up at once than go on doing it so disgracefully ill." This was awful, and made my heart sink down into my shoes, whatever might have been the fervour of applause with which the audience had greeted my performance.

My life now became settled in its new shape. I acted regularly three times a week; I had no rehearsals, since "Romeo and Juliet" went on during

the whole season, and so my mornings were still my own. I always dined in the middle of the day (and invariably on a mutton-chop, so that I might have been a Harrow boy, for diet); I was taken by my aunt early to the theatre, and there in my dressing-room sat through the entire play, when I was not on the stage, with some piece of tapestry or needlework, with which, during the intervals of my tragic sorrows, I busied my fingers; my thoughts being occupied with the events of my next scene and the various effects it demanded. When I was called for the stage, my aunt came with me, carrying my train, that it might not sweep the dirty floor behind the scenes; and after spreading it out and adjusting its folds carefully, as I went on, she remained at the side scene till I came off again, then gathered it on her arm, and, folding a shawl around me, escorted me back to my dressing-room and tapestry; and so my theatrical evenings were passed. My parents would not allow me to go into the green-room, where they thought my attention would be distracted from my business, and where I might occasionally meet with undesirable associates. My salary was fixed at thirty guineas a week, and the Saturday after I came out I presented myself for the first and last time at the treasury of the theatre to receive it, and carried it, clinking, with great triumph to my mother, the first money I ever earned.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more radical than the change which three weeks had made in the aspect of my whole life. From an insignificant school-girl, I had suddenly become an object of general public interest. I was a little lion in society,

and the town talk of the day. Approbation, admiration, adulation, were showered upon me; every condition of my life had been altered, as by the wand of a fairy. Instead of the twenty pounds a year which my poor father squeezed out of his hard-earned income for my allowance, out of which I bought (alas, with how much difficulty, seeing how many other things I would buy!) my gloves and shoes, I now had an assured income, as long as my health and faculties were unimpaired, of at least a thousand a year; and the thirty guineas a week at Covent Garden, and much larger remuneration during provincial tours, for ever forbade the sense of destitution productive of the ecstasy with which, only a short time before I came out, I had found wedged into the bottom of my money drawer in my desk a sovereign that I had overlooked, and so had sorrowfully concluded myself penniless till next allowance day. Instead of trudging long distances afoot through the muddy London streets, when the hire of a hackney-coach was matter of serious consideration, I had a comfortable and elegant carriage; I was allowed, at my own earnest request, to take riding lessons, and before long had a charming horse of my own, and was able to afford the delight of giving my father one, the use of which I hoped would help to invigorate and refresh him. The faded, threadbare, turned, and dyed frocks which were my habitual wear were exchanged for fashionably made dresses of fresh colours and fine texture, in which I appeared to myself transfigured. Our door was besieged with visitors, our evenings bespoken by innumerable in-

vitations; social civilities and courtesies poured in upon us from every side in an incessant stream; I was sought and petted and caressed by persons of conventional and real distinction, and every night that I did not act, I might, if my parents had thought it prudent to let me do so, have passed in all the gaiety of the fashionable world and the great London season. So much cordiality, sympathy, interest, and apparent genuine goodwill seemed to accompâny all these flattering demonstrations, that it was impossible for me not to be touched and gratified,—perhaps, too, unduly elated. If I was spoiled and my head turned, I can only say I think it would have needed a strong head not to be so; but God knows how pitiful a preparation all this tinsel sudden success and popularity formed for the duties and trials of my after-life.

CHAPTER III.

Among the persons whom I used to see behind the scenes were two who, for different reasons, attracted my attention: one was the Earl of W——, and the other the Rev. A. F. C——. I was presented to Lord and Lady W—— in society, and visited them more than once at their place near Manchester. But before I had made Lord W——'s acquaintance he was an object of wondering admiration to me, not altogether unmixed with a slight sense of the ridiculous, only because it passed my comprehension how any real, live man could be so exactly like the description of a particular kind of man, in a particular kind of book. There was no fault to find with the elegance of his appearance and his remarkable good looks; he certainly was the beau ideal of a dandy,—with his slender, perfectly dressed figure, his pale complexion, regular features, fine eyes, and dark, glossy waves of hair, and the general aristocratic distinction of his whole person,—and was so like the Earl of So-and-So, in the fashionable novel of the day, that I always longed to ask him what he did at the end of the "third volume," and "whether he or Sir Reginald married Lady Geraldine." But why this exquisite

par excellence should always have struck me as slightly absurd, I cannot imagine. The Rev. A. F. C—— was the natural son of William IV. and Mrs. Jordan, and vicar of Maple Durham; when first I came out, this young gentleman attended every one of my performances, first in one of the stage boxes and afterwards in a still nearer position to the stage, one of the orchestra reserved seats. Thence, one night, he disappeared, and, to my surprise, I saw him standing at one of the side scenes during the whole play. My mother remarking at supper his non-attendance in his usual place, my father said that he had come to him at the beginning of the play, and asked, for his mother's sake, to be allowed occasionally to present himself behind the scenes. My father said this reference to Mrs. Jordan had induced him to grant the request so put, though he did not think the back of the scenes a very proper haunt for a gentleman of his cloth. There, however, Mr. F. C—— came, and evening after evening I saw his light kid gloves waving and gesticulating about, following in a sort of sympathetic dumb show the gradual development of my distress, to the end of the play. My father, at his request, presented him to me, but as I never remained behind the scenes or went into the green-room, and as he could not very well follow me upon the stage, our intercourse was limited to silent bows and courtesies, as I went on and off, to my palace in Verona, or from Friar Laurence's cell. Mr. F. C—— appeared to me to have slightly mistaken his vocation: that others had done so for him was made more manifest to me by my subsequent acquaintance with

him. I encountered him one evening at a very gay ball given by the Countess de S——. Almost as soon as I came into the room he rushed at me, exclaiming, "Oh, do come and dance with me, that's a dear good girl." The "dear good girl" had not the slightest objection to dancing with anybody, dancing being then my predominant passion, and a chair a perfectly satisfactory partner if none other could be come by. While dancing, I was unpleasantly struck with the decidedly unreverend tone of my partner's remarks. Clergymen danced in those days without reproach, but I hope that even in those days of dancing clerks, they did not often talk so very much to match the tripping of the light fantastic toe. My amazement reached its climax when, seeing me exchange signs of amicable familiarity with some one across the room, Mr. F. C—— said, "Who are you nodding and smiling to? Oh, your father. You are very fond of him, an't you?" To my enthusiastic reply in the affirmative, he said, "Ah, yes; just so. I dare say you are." And then followed an expression of his filial disrespect for the highest personage in the realm, of such a robust significance as fairly took away my breath. Surprised into a momentary doubt of my partner's sobriety, I could only say, "Mr. F. C——, if you do not change your style of conversation I must sit down and leave you to finish the dance alone." He confounded himself in repeated apologies and entreaties that I would finish the dance with him, and as I could not find a word to say to him, he went on eagerly to excuse himself by a short sketch of his life, telling me that he had not been bred to the

Church and had the greatest disinclination to taking orders; that he had been trained as a sailor, the navy being the career that he preferred above all others, but that in consequence of the death of a brother he had been literally taken from on board ship, and, in spite of the utmost reluctance on his part, compelled to go into the Church. "Don't you think it's a hard case?" reiterated he, as I still found it difficult to express my opinion either of him or of his "case," both appearing to me equally deplorable. At length I suggested that, since he had adopted the sacred calling he professed, perhaps it would be better if he conformed to it at least by outward decency of language and decorum of demeanour. To this he assented, adding with a sigh, "But, you see, some people have a natural turn for religion; you have, for instance, I'm sure; but you see I have not." This appeared to me incontrovertible. Presently, after a pause, he asked me if I would write a sermon for him, which tribute to my talent for preaching, of which he had just undergone a sample, sent me into fits of laughter, though I replied with some indignation, "Certainly not; I am not a proper person to write sermons, and you ought to write your own!" "Yes," said he, with rather touching humility, "but you see I can't,—not good ones, at least. I'm sure you could, and I wish you would write one for me; Mrs. N—— has." This statement terminated the singular conversation, which had been the accompaniment to a quadrille. The vicar of Maple Durham is dead; had he lived he would doubtless have become a bishop; his family had already furnished its con-

tingent to the army and navy, in Lord E. and Lord A. F. C——, and the living of Maple Durham had to be filled and he to be provided for; and whenever the virtues of the Established Church system are under discussion, I try to forget this, and one or two similar instances I have known of its vices as it existed in those days. But that was near "fifty years since," and such a story as that of my poor sailor-parson friend could hardly be told now. Nor could one often now in any part of England find the fellow of my friend H. D——, who was also the predestined incumbent of a family living. He was passionately fond of hunting; and, clinging to his beloved "pink" even after holy orders had made it rather indecorous wear, used to huddle on his sacred garments of office at week-day solemnities of marrying or burying, and, having accomplished his clerical duties, rapidly divest himself of his holy robes, and bloom forth in unmitigated scarlet and buckskins, while the temporary cloud of sanctity which had obscured them was rapidly rolled into the vestry closet.

I confess to having heard with sincere sympathy the story of a certain excellent clergyman of Yorkshire breeding, who, finding it impossible to relinquish his hunting, carried it on simultaneously with the most exact and faithful discharge of his clerical duties until, arriving at length at the high dignity of the archbishopric of York, though neither less able for, nor less devoted to, his favourite pursuit, thought it expedient to abandon it and ride to hounds no more. He still rode, however, harder, farther, faster, and better than most men, but conscientiously avoided

the hunting-field. Coming accidentally, one day, upon the hounds when they had lost the scent, and trotting briskly away, after a friendly acknowledgment of the huntsman's salutation, he presently caught sight of the fox, when, right reverend prelate as he was, he gave a "view halloo" to be heard half the county over, and fled in the opposite direction at a full gallop, while the huntsman, in an ecstasy, cheered on his pack with an exclamation of "That's gospel truth, if ever I heard it!"

A. F. C—— was pleasant-looking, though not handsome, like the royal family of England, whose very noble *port de tête* he had, with a charming voice that, my father said, came to him from his mother.

I have spoken of my being allowed to take riding lessons, and of purchasing a horse, which was not only an immense pleasure to me, but, I believe, a very necessary means of health and renovation, in the life of intense and incessant excitement which I was leading.

For some time after my first coming out I lost my sleep almost entirely, and used to lie wide awake the greater part of the night. With more use of my new profession this nervous wakefulness wore off; but I was subject to very frequent and severe pains in the side, which any strong emotion almost invariably brought on, and which were relieved by nothing but exercise on horseback. The refreshment of this panacea for bodily and mental ailments was always such to me, that often, returning from balls where I had danced till daylight, I used to feel that if I could have an hour's gallop in the fresh morning air,

I should be revived beyond all sleep that I could then get.

Once only I was allowed to test my theory, and I found that the result answered my expectations entirely. I had been acting in Boston every night for a whole week, and on Saturday night had acted in two pieces, and was to start at one o'clock in the morning for New York, between which and Boston there was no railroad in those days. I was not feeling well, and was much exhausted by my hard work, but I was sure that if I could only begin my journey on horseback instead of in the lumbering, rolling, rocking, heavy, straw-and-leather-smelling "Exclusive Extra" (that is, private stage-coach), I should get over my fatigue and the rest of the journey with some chance of not being completely knocked up by it. After much persuasion my father consented, and after the two pieces of our farewell night, to a crowded, enthusiastic house, all the excitement of which of course told upon me even more than the actual exertion of acting, I had some supper, and at one o'clock, with our friend, Major M——, and ——, got on horseback, and rode out of Boston. Major M—— rode with us only about three miles, and then turned back, leaving us to pursue our road to Dedham, seven miles farther, where the carriage, with my father and aunt, was to meet us.

The thermometer stood at seventeen degrees below zero; it was the middle of a Massachusetts winter, and the cold intense. The moon was at the full, and the night as bright as day; not a stone but was visible on the iron-hard road, that rang under our horses' hoofs. The whole country was sheeted with

snow, over which the moon threw great floods of yellow light, while here and there a broken ridge in the smooth, white expanse turned a sparkling, crystalline edge up to the lovely splendour. It was wonderfully beautiful and exhilarating, though so cold that my veil was all frozen over my lips, and we literally hardly dared utter a word for fear of swallowing scissors and knives in the piercing air, which, however, was perfectly still and without the slightest breath of wind. So we rode hard and fast and silently, side by side, through the bright, profound stillness of the night, and never drew rein till we reached Dedham, where the carriage with my father and aunt had not yet arrived. Not a soul was stirring, and not a sound was heard, in the little New England village; the country tavern was fast shut up; not a light twinkled from any window, or thread of smoke rose from any chimney; every house had closed its eyes and ears, and gone to sleep. We had ridden the whole way as fast as we could, and had kept our blood warm by the violent exercise, but there was every danger, if we sat many minutes on our saddles in the piercing cold, that we should be all the worse instead of the better for that circumstance. Mr. —— rode along the houses, looking for some possible shelter, and at last, through the chink of a shutter, spying a feeble glimmer of light, dismounted, and, knocking, asked if it were possible for me to be admitted there for a few minutes, till the carriage, which could not be far distant, came up. He was answered in the affirmative, and I jumped down from my saddle, and ran into the friendly refuge, while he

paced rapidly to and fro before the house, leading the horses, to keep himself and them alike from freezing; a man was to come on the coach-box with the driver, to take them back to Boston. On looking round I found myself in a miserable little low room, heated almost to suffocation by an iron stove, and stifling with the peculiar smell of black dye-stuffs. Here, by the light of two wretched bits of candle, two women were working with the utmost despatch at mourning-garments for a funeral which was to take place that day, in a few hours. They did not speak to me after making room for me near the stove, and the only words they exchanged with each other were laconic demands for scissors, thread, etc.; and so they rapidly plied their needles in silence, while I, suddenly transported from the cold brightness without into this funereal, sweltering atmosphere of what looked like a Black Hole made of crape and bombazine, watched the lugubrious occupation of the women as if I was in a dream, till the distant rumbling of wheels growing more and more distinct, I took leave of my temporary hostesses with many thanks (they were poor New England workwomen, by whom no other species of acknowledgment would have been received), and was presently fast asleep in the corner of the carriage, and awoke only long after to feel rested and refreshed, and well able to endure the fatigue of the rest of the journey. In spite of this fortunate result, I do not now, after a lapse of forty years, think the experiment one that would have answered with many young women's constitutions, though there is no sort of doubt that the nervous energy generated by any

pleasurable emotion is in itself a great preservative from unfavourable influences.

My riding-master was the best and most popular teacher in London—Captain Fozzard—or, as he was irreverently called among his young Amazons, "Old Fozzard." When my mother took me to the riding school, he recalled, with many compliments, her own proficiency as an equestrian, and said he would do his best to make me as fine a horsewoman as she had been. He certainly did his best to improve a very good seat, and a heavy, defective hand with which nature had endowed me; the latter, however, was incorrigible, and so, though I was always a fearless horsewoman, and very steady in my saddle, I never possessed the finer and more exquisite part of the accomplishment of riding, which consists in the delicate and skilful management of a horse's mouth. Fozzard's method was so good that all the best lady riders in London were his pupils, and one could tell one of them at a glance, by the perfect squareness of the shoulders to the horse's head, which was one invariable result of his teaching. His training was eminently calculated to produce that result, and to make us all but immovable in our saddles. Without stirrup, without holding the reins, with our arms behind us, and as often as not sitting left-sided on the saddle, to go through violent plunging, rearing, and kicking lessons, and taking our horses over the bar, was a conisderable test of a firm seat, and in all these special feats I became a proficient.

One day, when I had gone to the school more for exercise than a lesson, and was taking a solitary

canter in the tan for my own amusement, the little door under the gallery opened, and Fozzard appeared, introducing a middle-aged lady and a young girl, who remained standing there while he advanced towards me, and presently began to put me through all my most crucial exercises, apparently for their edification. I was always delighted to go through these particular feats, which amused me excessively, and in which I took great pride. So I sat through them all, till, upon a sign from the elder lady, Fozzard, with extreme deference, opened the door and escorted them forth, and then returning to dismount me, informed me that I had given a very satisfactory sample of his teaching to the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, the latter of whom was to be placed under his tuition forthwith.

This was the first time I ever saw the woman who holds the most exalted position in the world, the Queen of England, who has so filled that supreme station that her name is respected wherever it is heard abroad, and that she is regarded by her own people with a loyal love such as no earthly dignity but that of personal worthiness can command.

James Street, Buckingham Gate.

DEAREST H——,

The kind exertion you made in writing to me so soon after leaving London deserved an earlier acknowledgment; but when I tell you that every day since Christmas I have fully purposed writing to you, and have not been able to do so before to-day, I hope you will excuse the delay, and believe

me when I assure you that not only the effort you made in going to the theatre, but your seeing me at all, are appreciated by me as very strong marks of your affection for me.

Now let me say something to you about Lady C—— L——'s criticism of my performance. In the first place, nothing is easier than to criticize by comparison, and hardly anything much more difficult than to form a correct judgment of any work of art (be it what it may) upon the foundation of abstract principles and fundamental rules of taste and criticism; for this sort of analysis is really a study. Comparison is the criticism of the multitude, and I almost wonder at its being resorted to by a woman of such ability as Lady C——. I only say this by the way, for to be compared with either Mrs. Siddons or Miss O'Neill is above my expectation. They were both professional actresses, which I can hardly yet claim to be; women who had for years studied the mechanical part of their art, and rendered themselves proficients in their business; whilst although I have certainly had many advantages, in hearing the stage and acting constantly, tastefully, and thoughtfully discussed, I am totally inexperienced in all the minor technical processes, most necessary for the due execution of any dramatic conception. As to my aunt Siddons—look at her, H——; look at her fine person, her beautiful face; listen to her magnificent voice, and supposing that I were as highly endowed with poetical dramatic imagination as she was (which I certainly am not), is it likely that there can ever be a shadow of comparison between her and myself, even when

years may have corrected all that is at present crude and imperfect in my efforts?

This is my sole reply to her ladyship. To you, dearest H——, I can add that I came upon the stage quite uncertain as to the possession of any talent for it whatever; I do not think I am now deceived as to the quantity I can really lay claim to, by the exaggerated praises of the public, who have been too long deprived of any female object of special interest on the boards to be very nice about the first that is presented to them; nor am I unconscious of the amount of work that will be requisite to turn my abilities to their best use. Wait; have patience; by-and-by, I hope, I shall do better. It is very true that to be the greatest actress of my day is not the aim on which my happiness depends. But having embraced this career, I think I ought not to rest satisfied with any degree of excellence short of what my utmost endeavour will enable me to attain in it. . . .

My print, or rather the print of me, from Sir Thomas Lawrence's drawing, is out. He has promised you one, so I do not. There are also coming out a series of sketches by Mr. Hayter, from my Juliet, with a species of *avant propos* written by Mrs. Jameson; this will interest you, and I will send you a copy of it when it is published.

I will tell you a circumstance of much anxious hope to us all just now, but as the result is yet uncertain, do not mention it. We have a species of offer of a living for my brother John, who, you know, is going into the Church. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and I most sincerely

hope we may not be disappointed. He is still in Germany, very happy and very metaphysical; should we obtain this living, however, I suppose he would return immediately. Independently of my wish to see him again, I shall be glad when he leaves Germany, I think; but I have not time for what I think about Germany to-day, and you must be rather tired of

Yours most affectionately,

F. A. K.

Mr. Hayter's graceful sketches of me in Juliet were lithographed and published with Mrs. Jameson's beautifully written but too flattering notice of my performance; the original drawings were purchased by Lord Ellesmere. The second part assigned to me by the theatre authorities was Belvidera, in Otway's "Venice Preserved." I had never read the play until I learnt my part, nor seen it until I acted it. It is, I believe, one of the longest female parts on the stage. But I had still my school-girl capacity for committing quickly to memory, and learned it in three hours. Acting it was a very different matter. I was no longer sustained by the genius of Shakespeare, no longer stimulated by the sublime passion and exquisite poetry. Juliet was a reality to me, a living individual woman, whose nature I could receive, as it were, into mine at once, without effort, comprehending and expressing it. Belvidera seemed to me a sort of lay figure in a tragic attitude, a mere "female in general," without any peculiar or specific characteristics whatever; placed as Belvidera is in

the midst of sordidly painful and coarsely agonizing circumstances, there was nothing in the part itself that affected my feelings or excited my imagination; and the miserable situations into which the poor creature was thrown throughout the piece revolted me, and filled me with disgust for the men she had to do with, without inspiring me with any sympathy for her. In this piece, too, I came at once into the unfavourable light of full comparison with my aunt's performance of the part, which was one of her famous ones. A friend of hers and mine, my dear and excellent William Harness, said that seeing me was exactly like looking at Mrs. Siddons through the diminishing end of an opera glass. My personal likeness to her, in spite of my diminutive size and irregular features, was striking, and of course suggested, to those who remembered her, associations which were fatal to my satisfactory performance of the part. I disliked the play and the character of Belvidera, and I am sure I must have played it very indifferently.

I remember one circumstance connected with my first performance of it which proved how painfully the unredeemed horror and wretchedness of the piece acted upon my nerves and imagination. In the last scene, where poor Belvidera's brain gives way under her despair, and she fancies herself digging for her husband in the earth, and that she at last recovers and seizes him, I intended to utter a piercing scream; this I had not of course rehearsed, not being able to scream deliberately in cold blood, so that I hardly knew, myself, what manner of utterance I should find for

my madness. But when the evening came, I uttered shriek after shriek without stopping, and rushing off the stage ran all round the back of the scenes, and was pursuing my way, perfectly unconscious of what I was doing, down the stairs that led out into the street, when I was captured and brought back to my dressing-room and my senses.

The next piece in which I appeared was Murphy's "Grecian Daughter;" a feeble and inflated composition, as inferior in point of dramatic and poetical merit to Otway's "Venice Preserved," as that is to any of Shakespeare's masterpieces. It has situations of considerable effect, however, and the sort of parental and conjugal interest that infallibly strikes sympathetic chords in the *pater familias* bosom of an English audience. The choice of the piece had in it, in my opinion, an ingredient of bad taste, which, objectionable as it seemed to me, had undoubtedly entered into the calculation of the management, as likely to increase the effect and success of the play; I mean the constant reference to Euphrasia's filial devotion, and her heroic and pious efforts in behalf of her old father—incidents in the piece which were seized upon and applied to my father and myself by the public, and which may have perhaps added to the feeling of the audience, as they certainly increased my dislike for the play. Here, too, I again encountered the formidable impression which Mrs. Siddons had produced in the part, of which, in spite of the turgid coldness and stilted emphasis of the style, she had made a perfect embodiment of heroic grandeur and classical grace. My Euphrasia was, I am sure, a pitiful picture of an antique heroine, in spite

of Macdonald's enthusiasm for the "attitude" in the last scene, and my cousin Horace Twiss's comical verdict of approbation, that it was all good, but especially the scene where "you tip it the tyrant."

James Street, Buckingham Gate, January 17, 1830.

DEAREST H——,

Although my mind is much occupied just now with a new part in which I appear to-morrow, I take advantage of the bodily rest this day affords me to write you a few lines, which I fear I might not find time for again as soon as I wish. There was enough in your last letter, dear H——, to make me melancholy, independently of the question which you ask respecting my picture in Juliet, and which the papers have by this time probably answered to you.

Sir Thomas Lawrence is dead. The event has been most distressing, and most sudden and unexpected to us. It really seemed as though we had seen him but the day before we heard of it; and indeed, it was but a few days since my mother had called on him, and since he had written to me a long letter on the subject of my Belvidera, full of refined taste and acute criticism, as all his letters to me were. It was a great shock; indeed, so much so, that absolute amazement for a little time prevented my feeling all the regret I have since experienced about it. Nor was it till I sat down to write to Cecilia, to request her to prevent any sudden communication of the event to my aunt Siddons, that I felt it was really true, and found some relief in crying. I had to act Belvidera that same night, and it was with a very heavy heart that I repeated those passages in

which poor Sir Thomas Lawrence had pointed out alterations and suggested improvements. He is a great loss to me, individually. His criticism was invaluable to me. He was a most attentive observer; no shade of feeling or slightest variation of action or inflection of voice escaped him; his suggestions were *always* improvements, conveyed with the most lucid clearness; and, as you will easily believe, his strictures were always sufficiently tempered with refined flattery to have disarmed the most sensitive self-love. My Juliet and Belvidera both owe much to him, and in this point of view alone his loss is irreparable to me. It is some matter of regret, too, as you may suppose, that we can have no picture of me by him, but this is a more selfish and less important motive of sorrow than my loss of his advice in my profession. I understand that my aunt Siddons was dreadfully shocked by the news, and cried, "And have I lived to see him go before me!" . . . His promise to send you a print from his drawing of me, dearest H——, he cannot perform, but I will be his executor in this instance, and if you will tell me how it can be conveyed to you, I will send you one.

This letter, my dearest H——, which was begun on Sunday, I now sit down to finish on Tuesday evening, and cannot do better, I think, than give you a full account of our last night's success; for a very complete success it was, I am happy to say. Murphy's play of "The Grecian Daughter" I suppose you know; or if you do not, your state is the more gracious, for certainly anything more flat, poor, and trashy I cannot well conceive. It had been, you know, a great part of

my aunt Siddons's, and nothing better proves her great dramatic genius than her having clothed so meagre a part in such magnificent proportions as she gave to it, and filled out by her own poetical conception the bare skeleton Mr. Murphy's Euphrasia presented to her. This frightened me a great deal; Juliet and Belvidera scarcely anybody can do ill, but Euphrasia I thought few people could do well, and I feared I was not one of them. Moreover, the language is at once so poor and so bombastic that I took double the time in getting the part by rote I should have taken for any part of Shakespeare's. My dress was beautiful; I think I will tell it you. You know you told me even an account of hat and feathers would interest you. My skirt was made immensely full and with a long train; it was of white merino, almost as fine as cashmere, with a rich gold Grecian border. The drapery which covered my shoulders (if you wish to look for the sort of costume in engravings, I give you its classical name, *peplum*) was made of the same material beautifully embroidered, leaving my arms quite free and uncovered. I had on flesh-coloured silk gloves, of course. A bright scarlet sash with heavy gilt acorns, falling to my feet, scarlet sandals to match, and a beautiful Grecian head-dress in gold, devised by my mother, completed the whole, which really had a very classical effect, the fine material of which my dress was formed falling with every movement into soft, graceful folds.

I managed to keep a good heart until I heard the flourish of drums and trumpets, in the midst of which I had to rush on the stage, and certainly when I did come on my appearance must have been curiously in

contrast with the "prave 'ords" I uttered, for I felt like nothing but a hunted hare, with my eyes starting from my head, my "nostrils all wide," and my limbs trembling to such a degree that I could scarcely stand. The audience received me very kindly, however, and after a little while I recovered my breath and self-possession, and got on very comfortably, considering that, what with nervousness and the short time they had had to study them in, none of the actors were perfect in their parts. My father acted Evander, which added, no doubt, to the interest of the situation. The play went off admirably, and I dare say it will be of some service to me, but I fear it is too dull and poor in itself, despite all that can be done for it, to be of much use to the theatre. One of my great difficulties in the play was to produce some striking effect after stabbing Dionysius, which was a point in which my aunt always achieved a great triumph. She used to fall on her knees as if deprecating the wrath of Heaven for what she had done, and her mode of performing this was described to me. But, independently of my anxiety to avoid any imitation that might induce a comparison that could not but be fatally to my disadvantage, I did not (to you I may venture to confess it) feel the situation in the same manner. Euphrasia had just preserved her father's life by a deed which, in her own estimation and that of her whole nation, entitled her to an immortal dwelling in the Elysian fields. The only feeling, therefore, that I can conceive as checking for a moment her exultation would be the natural womanly horror at the sight of blood and physical suffering, the expression of which

seems to me not only natural to her, as of the "feminine gender," but not altogether superfluous to reconcile an English audience to so *unfeminine* a proceeding as stabbing a man. To conciliate all this I adopted the course of immediately dropping the arm that held the dagger, and with the other veiling my eyes with the drapery of my dress, which answered better my own idea of the situation, and seemed to produce a great effect. My dearest H——, this is a long detail, but I think it will interest you and perhaps amuse your niece; if, however, it wearies your spirits, tell me so, and another time I will not confine my communications so much to my own little corner of life.

Cecilia dined with us on Sunday, but was very far from well. I have not seen my aunt Siddons since Sir Thomas Lawrence's death. I almost dread doing so: she must have felt so much on hearing it; he was for many years so mixed up with those dearest to her, and his memory must always recall theirs. I hear Campbell means to write his life. His letters to me will perhaps be published in it. Had I known they were likely to be so used, I would have preserved them all. As it is, it is the merest chance that all of them are not destroyed; for, admirable as they were in point of taste and critical judgment, some of them seemed to me such mere specimens of refined flattery that, having extracted the advice likely to be profitable to me, I committed the epistles themselves to the flames, which probably would have been the ultimate destination of them all; but now they have acquired a sad value they had not before, and I shall keep them as

relics of a man of great genius and, in many respects, I believe, a truly amiable person.

The drawing, which is, you know, my mother's property, is safe in Mr. Lane's hands, and will be restored to us on Saturday. The funeral takes place to-morrow; my father, I believe, will attend; neither my mother nor myself can muster courage to witness it, although we had places offered to us. It is to take place in St. Paul's, for Westminster Abbey is full. All the beautiful unfinished portraits which filled his rooms will be returned imperfect to their owners, and I wonder who will venture to complete them, for he has certainly not left his like behind him. Reports have been widely spread that his circumstances were much embarrassed, but I fancy when all his effects are sold there will be a small surplus. He behaved with the utmost liberality about his drawing of me, for he gave it to my mother, and would not accept of any remuneration for the copyright of the print from Mr. Lane,—who, it is said, made three hundred pounds by the first impressions taken from it,—saying that he had had so much pleasure in the work that he would not take a farthing for either time or trouble.

We are all tolerably well; I am quite so, and rejoice daily in that strength of constitution which, among other of my qualifications, entitles me to the appellation of "Shetland pony."

How are you all? How is E——? Tell her all about me, because it may amuse her. I wish you could have seen me, dear H——, in my Greek dress; I really look very well in it, and taller than usual, in consequence of all the long draperies; moreover, I

"stood grandly" erect, and put off the "sidelong stoop" in favour of a more heroic and statue-like deportment. Oh, H——, I am exceedingly happy, *et pour peu de chose*, perhaps you will think: my father has given me leave to have riding lessons, so that I shall be in right earnest "an angel on horseback," and when I come to Ardgillan (and it won't be long first) I shall make you mount upon a horse and gallop over the sand with me; won't you, my dear? Believe me ever your affectionate

FANNY.

The words in inverted commas at the end of this letter had reference to some strictures Miss S—— had made upon my carriage, and to a family joke against me in consequence of my having once said, in speaking of my desire to ride, that I should not care to be an angel in heaven unless I could be an "angel on horseback." My invariable description of a woman riding was "a happy woman," and after much experience of unhappiness, certainly not dissipated by equestrian exercise, I still agree with Wordsworth that "the horse and rider are a happy pair." After acting the Grecian Daughter for some time I altered my attitude in the last scene, after the murder of Dionysius, more to my own satisfaction: instead of dropping the arm that held the dagger by my side, I raised the weapon to heaven, as if appealing to the gods for justification and tendering them, as it were, the homage of my deed; of course I still continued to veil my eyes and turn my head away from the sight of my victim.

James Street, Buckingham Gate, Saturday, February 20th.

DEAREST H——,

I need hardly apologize to you for my long silence, for I am sure that you will have understood it to have proceeded from no want of inclination on my part to answer your last, but from really not having had half an hour at my command in which to do so. I have thought, too, (although that has not prevented my writing), much upon the tenor of your letter and the evident depression it was written in, and I hardly know how to resolve: whether I ought not to forbear wearying you with matters which every way are discordant with your own thoughts and feelings, or whether it is better, by inducing you to answer me, to give you some motive, however trifling, for exertion. Dearest H——, if the effort of writing to me is too painful to you, do not do it. I give you a most disinterested counsel, for I have told you more than once how much I prize your letters, and you know it is true. Still, I do not think my "wish is father to my thought" when I say that I think it is not good for you to lose entirely even such an interest as I am to you. I say "even such an interest," because I believe your trouble must have rendered me and my pursuits, for the present at least, less likely than they have been to occupy a place in your thoughts. But 'tis for you to decide; if my letters weary or annoy you, tell me so, dear H——, and I will not write to you until you can "follow my paces" better. If you do not like to make the exertion of answering me, I will still continue to let you know my proceedings, and take it for granted that you will not cease to love

me and think of me. Dear H——, I shall see you this summer again; you, and yours, whom I love for your sake. I shall go on with this letter, because if you are inclined for a gossip you can read it; and if not, it may perhaps amuse your invalid. I have been uncommonly gay, for me, this winter, and I dare say shall continue to be so, as it does not disagree with me, and I am so fond of dancing that a quadrille renders palatable what otherwise would be, I think, disagreeable enough—the manner in which society is now organized. I was at a very large party the other night, at the poet Campbell's, where every material for a delightful evening—good rooms, pretty women, clever men—was brought into requisition to make what, after all, appeared to me nothing but a wearisome, hot crowd. The apartments were overfilled: to converse with anybody for five minutes was impossible. If one stood up one was squeezed to death, and if one sat down one was stifled. I, too, (who was the small lioness of the evening), was subjected to a most disagreeable ordeal, the whole night being stared at from head to foot by every one that could pass within staring distance of me. You probably will wonder at this circumstance distressing a young person who three times a week exhibits herself on the stage to several hundred people, but there I do not distinguish the individual eyes that are fixed on me, and my mind is diverted from the annoyances of my real situation by the distressful circumstances of my feigned one. Moreover, to add to my sorrows, at the beginning of the evening a lady spilled some coffee over a beautiful dress which I was wearing for the first time.

Now I will tell you what consolations I had to support me under these trials; first, the self-approving consciousness of the smiling fortitude with which I bore my gown's disaster; secondly, a lovely nosegay, which was presented to me; and lastly, at about twelve o'clock, when the rooms were a little thinned, a dance for an hour which sent me home perfectly satisfied with my fate. By-the-by, I asked Campbell if he knew any method to preserve my flowers from fading, to which he replied, "Give them to me, and I will immortalize them." I did so, and am expecting some verses from him in return.

On Thursday next I come out in Mrs. Beverley; I am much afraid of it. The play wants the indispensable attribute of all works of art—imagination; it is a most touching story, and Mrs. Beverley is a most admirable creature, but the story is such as might be read in a newspaper, and her character has its like in many an English home. I think the author should have idealized both his incidents and his heroine a little, to produce a really fine play. Mrs. Beverley is not one shade inferior to Imogen in purity, in conjugal devotion, and in truth, but while the one is to all intents and purposes a model wife, a poet's touch has made of the other a divine image of all that is lovely and excellent in woman; and yet, certainly, Imogen is quite as *real* a conception as Mrs. Beverley. The absence of the poetical element in the play prevents my being enthusiastic about my part, and I am the more nervous about it for that reason; when I am excited I feel that I can excite others, but in this case—— However, we shall see; I may succeed with

it better than I expect, and perhaps my audience may like to see me as a quiet, sober lady, after the Belvideras and Juliets and Euphrasias they have hitherto seen me represent. I will tell you my dress: it is a silver grey silk, and a white crape hat with drooping feathers. I think it will be very pretty. My father acts Beverley with me, which will be a great advantage to me.

Oh! I must tell you of a delightful adventure which befell me the other night while I was acting in "The Grecian Daughter." Mr. Abbot, who personates my husband, Phocion, at a certain part of the play where we have to embrace, thought fit to clasp me so energetically in his arms that he threw me down, and fell down himself. I fell seated, with all my draperies in most modest order, which was very fortunate, but certainly I never was more frightened or confused. However, I soon recovered my presence of mind, and helped my better half on with his part, for he was quite aghast, poor man, at his own exploit, and I do believe would have been standing with his eyes and mouth wide open to this moment, if I had not managed to proceed with the scene somehow and anyhow.

I gave the commission for your print of me, dear H——, to Colnaghi, and I hope you will like it, and that the more you look at it the stronger the likeness will appear to you. Was my brother John returned from Germany, when last I wrote to you? I forget. However, he has just left us to take his degree at Cambridge, previous to being ordained. Henry, too, returned yesterday to Paris, so that the house is in

mourning for its liveliest inmates. I continue quite well, and indeed I think my work agrees with me; or if I am a little tired with acting, why, a night's dancing soon sets me right again. T—— B—— is in town, and came to see me the other day. I like her; she is a gentle, nice person; she is going back in a week to Cassiobury. How I wish you and I had wings, and that Heath Farm belonged to us! It is coming to the time of year when we first became acquainted; and, besides all its associations of kindly feeling and affectionate friendship, your image is connected in my mind with all the pleasantest things in nature—the spring, May blossoms, glow-worms, "bright hill and bosky dell;" and it dates from somewhere "'twixt the last violet and the earliest rose," which is not a quotation, though I have put it in inverted commas, but something that just came to the tip of my pen and looks like poetry. I must leave off now, for I got leave to stay at home to-night to write to you instead of going to the opera, with many injunctions that I would go to bed early; so, now it is late, I must do so. Good-bye, dearest H——; believe me ever

Yours most affectionately,

F. A. K.

P.S.—This is my summer tour—Bath, Edinburgh, Dublin, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham. I am Miss *Fanny* Kemble, because Henry Kemble's daughter, my uncle Stephen's granddaughter, is Miss Kemble by right of birth.

The lady who spoiled my pretty cream-coloured

poplin dress by spilling coffee on the front of it, instantly, in the midst of her vehement self-upbraidings and humble apologies for her awkwardness, adopted a very singular method of appeasing my displeasure and soothing my distress, by deliberately pouring a spoonful of coffee upon the front breadth of her own velvet gown. My amazement at this proceeding was excessive, and it neither calmed my wrath nor comforted my sorrow, but exasperated me with a sense of her extreme folly and her conviction of mine. The perpetrator of this singular act of atonement was the beautiful Julia, eldest daughter of the Adjutant-General, Sir John Macdonald, and the lady whom the Duke of Wellington pronounced the handsomest woman in London; a verdict which appeared to me too favourable, though she certainly was *one* of the handsomest women in London. An intimate acquaintance subsisted between her family and ours for several years, and I was indebted to Sir John Macdonald's assistance, most kindly exerted in my behalf, for the happiness of giving my youngest brother his commission in the army, which Sir John enabled me to purchase in his own regiment; and I was indebted to the great liberality of Mr. John Murray, the celebrated publisher, for the means of thus providing for my brother Henry. The generous price (remuneration I dare not call it) which he gave me for my play of "Francis the First" obtained for me my brother's commission.

James Street, Buckingham Gate, March 9th.

DEAREST H——,

I have been so busy all this day, signing benefit tickets, that I hardly feel as if I could write anything but "25th March, F. A. K." Our two last letters crossed on the road, and yours was so kind an answer to mine, which you had not yet received, that I feel no further scruple in breaking in upon you with the frivolity of my worldly occupations and proceedings.

I was sorry that the newspapers should give you the first account of my Mrs. Beverley, but my time is so taken up with "an infinite deal of nothing" that I have not had an hour to call my own till this evening, and this evening is my only unengaged one for nearly three weeks to come.

The papers will probably have set your mind at ease as to the result of my appearance in "The Gamester;" but although they have forestalled me in the sum total of the account, there are some small details which may perhaps interest you, of which they can give you no knowledge. I shall talk to you much of myself, dearest H——, and hope it will not weary you; that precious little self is just now so fully occupied with its own affairs that I have little else to talk of. [I probably also felt much as our kind and most comical friend Dessauer used, when he emphatically declared, "Mais, je m'interesse extrêmement à ce qui me regarde."]

I do not think I ever spent a more miserable day than the one in which I acted Mrs. Beverley for the first time. Stage nervousness, my father and mother

both tell me, increases instead of diminishing with practice; and certainly, as far as my own limited experience goes, I find it so. The first hazard, I should say, was not half so fearful as the last; and though on the first night that I ever stood upon the stage I thought I never could be more frightened in my life, I find that with each new part my fear has augmented in proportion as previous success would have rendered it more damaging to fail. A stumble at starting would have been bad enough, and might have bruised me; but a fall from the height to which I have been raised might break my neck, or at any rate cripple me for life. I do not believe that to fail in a part would make me individually unhappy for a moment; but so much of real importance to others, so much of the most serious interests and so much of the feelings of those most dear to me, is involved in the continuance of my good fortune, that I am in every way justified in dreading a failure. These considerations, and their not unnatural result, a violent head-ache and side-ache, together with no very great liking for the part (interesting as it is, it is so perfectly prosaic), had made me so nervous that the whole of the day was spent in fits of crying; and when the curtain drew up, and I was "discovered," I'm sure I must have looked as jaded and tear-worn as poor Mrs. Beverley ever did. However, all went well with me till the last act, when my father's acting and my own previous state of nervousness combined to make my part of the tragedy anything but feigning; I sobbed so violently that I could hardly articulate my words, and at the last fell upon the dead body of Beverley with a hysterical cry

that had all the merit of pure nature, if none other, to recommend it. Fortunately the curtain fell then, and I was carried to my dressing-room to finish my fit in private. The last act of that play gives me such pains in my arms and legs, with sheer nervous distress, that I am ready to drop down with exhaustion at the end of it; and this reminds me of the very difficult question which you expect me to answer, respecting the species of power which is called into play in the act, so called, of *acting*.

I am the worst reasoner, analyser, and metaphysician that ever was born; and therefore whatever I say on the subject can be worth very little, as a reply to your question, but may furnish you with some data for making a theory about it for yourself.

It appears to me that the two indispensable elements of fine acting are a certain amount of poetical imagination and a power of assumption, which is a good deal the rarer gift of the two; in addition to these, a sort of vigilant presence of mind is necessary, which constantly looks after and avoids or removes the petty obstacles that are perpetually destroying the imaginary illusion, and reminding one in one's own despite that one is not really Juliet or Belvidera. The curious part of acting, to me, is the sort of double process which the mind carries on at once, the combined operation of one's faculties, so to speak, in diametrically opposite directions; for instance, in that very last scene of Mrs. Beverley, while I was half dead with crying in the midst of the *real* grief, created by an entirely *unreal* cause, I perceived that my tears were falling like rain all over my silk dress, and spoiling it; and I calcu-

lated and measured most accurately the space that my father would require to fall in, and moved myself and my train accordingly in the midst of the anguish I was to feign, and absolutely did endure. It is this watchful faculty (perfectly prosaic and commonplace in its nature), which never deserts me while I am uttering all that exquisite passionate poetry in Juliet's balcony scene, while I feel as if my own soul was on my lips, and my colour comes and goes with the intensity of the sentiment I am expressing; which prevents me from falling over my train, from setting fire to myself with the lamps placed close to me, from leaning upon my canvas balcony when I seem to throw myself all but over it. In short, while the whole person appears to be merely following the mind in producing the desired effect and illusion upon the spectator, both the intellect and the senses are constantly engrossed in guarding against the smallest accidents that might militate against it; and while representing things absolutely imaginary, they are taking accurate cognizance of every real surrounding object that can either assist or mar the result they seek to produce. This seems to me by far the most singular part of the process, which is altogether a very curious and complicated one. I am glad you got my print safe; it is a very beautiful thing (I mean the drawing), and I am glad to think that is like me, though much flattered. I suppose it is like what those who love me have sometimes seen me, but to the majority of my acquaintance it must appear unwarrantably good-looking. The effect of it is much too large for me, but when my mother ventured to

suggest this to Lawrence, he said that that was a peculiarity of his drawings, and that he thought persons familiar with his style would understand it.

My dearest H——, you express something of regret at my necessity (I can hardly call it choice) of a profession. There are many times when I myself cannot help wishing it might have been otherwise; but then come other thoughts: the talent which I possess for it was, I suppose, given to me for some good purpose, and to be used. Nevertheless, when I reflect that although hitherto my profession has not appeared to me attractive enough to engross my mind, yet that admiration and applause, and the excitement springing therefrom, may become *necessary* to me, I resolve not only to watch but to pray against such a result. I have no desire to sell my soul for anything, least of all for sham fame, mere notoriety. Besides, my mind has such far deeper enjoyment in other pursuits; the *happiness* of reading Shakespeare's heavenly imaginations is so far beyond all the excitement of acting them (white satin, gas lights, applause, and all), that I connot conceive a time when having him in my hand will not compensate for the absence of any amount of public popularity. While I can sit obliviously curled up in an armchair, and read what he says till my eyes are full of delicious, quiet tears, and my heart of blessed, good, quiet thoughts and feelings, I shall not crave that which falls so far short of any real enjoyment, and hitherto certainly seems to me as remote as possible from any real happiness.

This enviable condition of body and mind was mine while studying Portia in "The Merchant of Venice,"

which is to be given on the 25th for my benefit. I shall be much frightened, I know, but I delight in the part; indeed, Portia is my favouritest of all Shakespeare's women. She is so generous, affectionate, wise, so arch and full of fun, and such a true lady, that I think if I could but convey her to my audience as her creator has conveyed her to me, I could not fail to please them much. I think her speech to Bassanio, after his successful choice of the casket, the most lovely, tender, modest, dignified piece of true womanly feeling that was ever expressed by woman.

I certainly ought to act that character well, I do so delight in it; I know nothing of my dress. But perhaps I shall have some opportunity of writing to you again before it is acted. Now all I have to say must be packed close, for I ought to be going to bed, and I have no more paper. I have taken two riding lessons and like it much, though it makes my bones ache a little. I go out a great deal, and that I like very much whenever there is dancing, but not else. My own home spoils me for society; perhaps I ought not to say it, but after the sort of conversation I am used to the mere usual jargon of society seems poor stuff; but you know when I am dancing I am "o'er all the ills of life victorious." John has taken his degree and will be back with us at Easter; Henry has left us for Paris; A—— is quite well, and almost more of a woman than I am; my father desires his love to you, to which I add mine to your eldest niece and your invalid, and remain ever your affectionately attached

F. A. K.

Blackheath.

MY DEAREST H——,

I was exceedingly glad to receive your letter. You ask me for my own criticism on my Portia; you know that I think I am able to do myself tolerably impartial justice, which may be a great mistake; but whether it is or not, I request you will believe the following account in preference to any other report, newspaper or letter, public or private, whatever.

In the first place, on my benefit night (my first appearance in the part) I was so excessively nervous about it, and so shaken with the tremendous uproar the audience made with their applause, that I consider that performance entirely out of the pale of criticism, and quite unworthy of it. I was *frightened* FLAT to a degree I could hardly have believed possible after my previous experience.

I am happy to think that I improve in the part, and sincerely hope that I shall continue to do so for some time. The principal defect of my acting in it is that it wants point—brilliancy. I do not do the trial scene one bit better or worse than the most mediocre actress would, and although the comic scenes are called delightful by people whose last idea of comedy was borrowed from Miss C—— or Miss F——, my mother says (and I believe her) they are very *vapid*. The best thing I do in the play (and I think it is the best thing I do at all, except Juliet's balcony scene) is the scene of the caskets, with Bassanio, and this I think I do *well*. But the scene is of so comparatively subdued, quiet, and uneffective a nature that I think

the occupants of the stage boxes and the first three rows of the pit must be the only part of the audience who know anything about my acting of that portion of the play. I like the part better than any I have yet played. I delight in the poetry, and my heart goes with every sentiment Portia utters. I have a real satisfaction in acting it, which is more than I can say for anything else I have yet had to do. Juliet, with the exception of the balcony scene, I act; but I feel as if I *were* Portia—and how I wish I were! It is not a part that is generally much liked by actresses, or that excites much enthusiasm in the public; there are no violent situations with which to (what is called) "bring the house down." Even the climax of the piece, the trial scene, I should call, as far as Portia is concerned, rather grand and impressive than strikingly or startlingly effective; and with the exception of that, the whole character is so delicate, so nicely blended, so true, and so free from all exaggeration, that it seems to me hardly fit for a theatre, much less one of our immense houses, which require acting almost as *splashy* and coarse in colour and outline as the scene-painting of the stage is obliged to be. Covent Garden is too large a frame for that exquisite, harmonious piece of portrait painting. This is a long lecture, but I hope it will not be an uninteresting one to you; and now let me tell you something of my dresses, which cost my poor mother sad trouble, and were really beautiful. My first was an open skirt of the palest pink levantine, shot with white and the deepest rose-colour (it was like a gown made of strawberries and cream), the folds of which, as the light

fell upon them, produced the most beautiful shades of shifting hues possible. The under-dress was a very pale blue satin, brocaded with silver, of which my sleeves were likewise made; the fashion of the costume was copied from sundry pictures of Titian and Paul Veronese—the pointed body, cut square over the bosom and shoulders, with a full white muslin shirt drawn round my neck, and wide white sleeves within the large blue and silver brocade ones. *Comprenez-vous* all this? My head was covered with diamonds (*not real;* I'm anxious for my character), and what delighted me much more was that I had jewels in the roses of my shoes. I think if I had been Portia I never would have worn any ornaments but two large diamonds in my shoe bows. You see, it shows a pretty good stock of diamonds and a careless superiority to such possessions to wear them on one's feet. Now pray don't laugh at me, I was *so* enchanted with my fine shoes! This was my first dress; the second was simply the doctor's black gown, with a curious little authentic black velvet hat, which was received with immense applause when I put it on; I could hardly keep my countenance at the effect my hat produced. My third dress, my own favourite, was made exactly like the first, the ample skirt gathered all round into the stomacher body; the material was white satin, trimmed with old point lace and Roman pearls, with a most beautiful crimson velvet hat, a perfect Rubens, with one sweeping white feather falling over it. . . .

We are spending our holiday of Passion week here for the sake of a little quiet and fresh air; we had

intended going to Dover, but were prevented. You ask me after my mother: she is pretty well now, but her health is extremely uncertain, and her spirits, which are likewise very variable, have so much influence over it that her condition fluctuates constantly; she has been very well, though, for the last few days. London, I think, never agrees with her, and we have been racketing to such a degree that quiet had become not only desirable but necessary. Thank you for wishing me plenty of dancing. I have abundance of it, and like it extremely; but I fear I am very unreasonable about it, for my conscience smote me the other day when I came to consider that the night before, although my mother had stayed at a ball with me till three in the morning, I was by no means gracious in my obedience to her request that I should spare myself for my work. You see, dear H——, I am much the same as ever, still as foolishly fond of dancing, and still, I fear, almost as far from "begetting a temperance in all things" as when you and I wandered about Heath Farm together.

We met with a comical little adventure the other evening. We were wandering over the common, and encountered two gipsies. I always had desired to have my fortune told, so A—— and I each seized hold of a sibyl and listened to our fates. After predicting to me all manner of good luck and two lovers, and foretelling that I should marry *blue eyes* (which I will not), the gipsy went up to my father, and began, "Pray, sir, let me tell your fortune: you have been much wronged, sir, kept out of your rights, sir, and what belonged to you, sir,—and that by them as you

thought was your friends, sir." My father turned away laughing, but my mother, with a face of amazed and amazing credulity, put her hand in her pocket, exclaiming, "I must give her something for that, though!" Isn't that delicious?

Oh, H——! how hard it is to do right and be good! But to be sure, "if to do were as easy as to know what were good to be done," etc. How I wish I could have an hour's talk with you! I have so much to say, and I have neither time nor paper to say it in; so I must leave off.

Good-bye, God bless you; pray look forward to the pleasure of seeing me, and believe me ever

Your affectionate

F. A. K.

The house where I used to visit at Lea, in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, was a girls' school, kept by ladies of the name of Grimani, in which my aunt Victoire Decamp was an assistant governess. These ladies were descended from a noble Venetian family, of which the Reverend Julian Young, their nephew, has given an account in his extremely interesting and amusing memoir of his father; his mother, Julia Grimani, being the sister of my kind friends, the directresses of the Blackheath school. One of these, Bellina Grimani, a charming and attractive woman, who was at one time attached to the household of the ill-fated and ill-conducted Caroline of Brunswick, Princess of Wales, died young and single. The elder Miss Grimani married a Mr. H—— within a few years. Though I have never in the

intervening fifty years met with them, I have seen two ladies who were nieces of Miss Grimani, and pupils in her school when I was a small visitor there. My principal recollections connected with the place were the superior moral excellence of one of these damsels, E—— B——, who was held up before my unworthy eyes as a model of school-girl virtue, at once to shame and encourage me; Bellina Grimani's sweet face and voice; some very fine cedar trees on the lawn, and a picture in the drawing-room of Prospero with his three-year-old Miranda in a boat in the midst of a raging sea, which work of art used to shake my childish bosom with a tragical passion of terror and pity, invariably ending in bitter tears. I was much spoilt and very happy during my visits to Lea, and had a blissful recollection of the house, garden, and whole place that justified my regret in not being able, while staying at Blackheath fifteen years after, to find or identify it.

CHAPTER IV.

James Street, Buckingham Gate, May 2nd.

My dearest H——,

I received your kind letter the other night (that is, morning) on my return from a ball, and read your reflections on dissipation with an attention heightened by the appropriate *comment* of a bad headache and abject weariness from top to toe with dancing. The way in which people *prosecute* their pleasures in this good town of London is certainly amazing; and we are (perforce) models of moderation, compared with most of our acquaintance. I met at that very ball persons who had been to one and two parties previously, and were leaving that dance to hurry to another. Independently of the great fatigue of such a life, it seems to me so strange that when people are enjoying themselves to their hearts' content in one place, they cannot be satisfied to remain there until they wish to return home, but spend half the night in the streets, running from one house to another, working their horses to death, and wasting the precious time when they might be dancing. You see my folly is not so great but that I have philosophy to spare for my neighbours. Let me tell you again,

dear H——, how truly I rejoice in your niece's restored health. The spring, too, is the very time for such a resurrection, when every day and every hour, every cloud and every flower, offer inexhaustible matter for the capabilities of delight thus regained. Indeed, "the drops on the trees are the most beautiful of all!" [E—— T——'s exclamation during one of her first drives after the long imprisonment of her nervous malady.] A wonderful feeling of renewed hope seems to fill the heart of all created things in the spring, and even here in this smoky town it finds its way to us, inclosed as we are by brick walls, dusty streets, and all things unlovely and unnatural! I stood yesterday in the little court behind our house, where two unhappy poplars and a sycamore tree were shaking their leaves as if in surprise at the acquisition and to make sure they had them, and looked up to the small bit of blue sky above them with pleasurable spring tears in my eyes. How I wish I were rich and could afford to be out of town now! I always dislike London, and this lovely weather gives me a sort of *mal du pays* for the country. My dearest H——, you must not dream of leaving Ardgillan just when I am coming to see you; that would be indeed a disappointment. My father is not at home at this moment, but I shall ask him before I close this letter the exact time when we shall be in Dublin. I look forward with much pleasure to making my aunt Dall known to you. She is, I am happy to say, coming with me, for indeed she is in some sense my "all the world." You have often heard me speak of her, but it is difficult for words to do justice to one whose whole

life is an uninterrupted stream of usefulness, goodness, and patient devotion to others. I know but one term that, as the old writers say, "delivers" her fully, and though it is not unfrequently applied, I think she is the only person I know who really deserves it; she is *absolutely unselfish*. I am sure, dear H——, you will excuse this panegyric, though you do not know how well it is deserved; the proof of its being so is that there is not one of us but would say the same of aunt Dall.

My father's benefit took place last Wednesday, when I acted Isabella; the house was crowded and the play very successful; I think I played it well, and I take credit to myself for so doing, for I dislike both play and part extremely. The worst thing I do in it is the soliloquy when I am about to stab Biron, and the best, my death. My dresses were very beautiful, and I am exceedingly glad the whole thing is over. I suppose it will be my last new part this season. I am reading with great pleasure a purified edition, just published, of the old English dramatists; the work, as far as my ignorance of the original plays will enable me to judge, seems very well executed, and I owe the editor many thanks for some happy hours spent with his book. I have just heard something which annoys me not a little: I am to prepare to act Mrs. Haller. I know very well that nobody was ever at liberty in this world to do what they liked and that only; but when I know with what task-like feeling I set about most of my work, I am both amused and provoked when people ask me if I do not delight in acting. I have not an idea what to do with that

part; however, I must apply myself to it, and try; such mawkish sentiment and such prosaic, commonplace language seem to me alike difficult to feel and to deliver.

My dear H——, I shall be in Ireland the whole month of July. I am coming first to Dublin, and shall afterwards go to Cork. You really must not be away when I come, for if you are, I won't come, which is good Irish, isn't it? I do not feel as you do, at all, about the sea. Instead of depressing my spirits, it always raises them; it seems to me as if the vast power of the great element communicated itself to me. I feel *strong*, as I run by the side of the big waves, with something of their strength, and the same species of wild excitement which thunder and lightning produce in me always affects me by the sea-shore. I never saw the sea but once violently agitated, and then I was so well pleased with its appearance that I took a boat and went out into the bustle, singing with all my might, which was the only vent I could find for my high spirits; it is true that I returned in much humiliation, very seasick, after a very short "triumph of Galatea" indeed.

You ask me in one of your last why I do not send you verses any more, as I used to do, and whether I still write any. So here I send you some which I improvised the other day in your honour, and which, written hurriedly as they were, will not, I think, stand the test of any very severe criticism :—

Whene'er I recollect the happy time
When you and I held converse sweet together,

There come a thousand thoughts of sunny weather,
Of early blossoms, and the young year's prime.
Your memory lives for ever in my mind,
With all the fragrant freshness of the spring,
With odorous lime and silver hawthorn twined,
And mossy rest and woodland wandering.
There's not a thought of you but brings along
Some sunny glimpse of river, field, and sky;
Your voice sets words to the sweet blackbird's song,
And many a snatch of wild old melody;
And as I date it still our love arose
'Twixt the last violet and the earliest rose.

I never go anywhere without a book wherein I may scratch my valuable ideas, and therefore when we meet I will show you my present receptacle. I take great delight in writing, and write less incorrectly than I used to do. I have not time now to go on with this letter, and as I am anxious you should know when to expect us, I shall not defer it in the hope of making it more amusing, though I fear it is rather dull. But you will not mind that, and will believe me ever your affectionate

FANNY KEMBLE.

The arrangement of Massinger for the family library by my friend the Reverend Alexander Dyce, the learned Shakespearean editor and commentator, was my first introduction to that mine of dramatic wealth which enriched the literature of England in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, and culminated in the genius of Shakespeare. It is by comparison with them, his contemporaries, that we arrive at a just estimate of his supremacy. I was so enchanted with these plays of Massinger's, but more

especially with the one called "The Maid of Honour," that I never rested till I had obtained from the management its revival on the stage. The part of Camiola is the only one that I ever selected for myself. "The Maid of Honour" succeeded on its first representation, but failed to attract audiences. Though less defective than most of the contemporaneous dramatic compositions, the play was still too deficient in interest to retain the favour of the public. The character of Camiola is extremely noble and striking, but that of her lover so unworthy of her that the interest she excites personally fails to inspire one with sympathy for her passion for him. The piece in this respect has a sort of moral incoherency, which appears to me, indeed, not an infrequent defect in the compositions of these great dramatic pre-Shakespearites. There is a want of psychical verisimilitude, a disjointed abruptness, in their conceptions, which, in spite of their grand treatment of separate characters and the striking force of particular passages, renders almost every one of their plays inharmonious as a whole, however fine and powerful in detached parts. Their selection of abnormal and detestable subjects is a distinct indication of intellectual weakness instead of vigour; supreme genius alone perceives the beauty and dignity of human nature and human life in their common conditions, and can bring to the surface of vulgar, every-day existence the hidden glory that lies beneath it.

The strictures contained in these girlish letters on the various plays in which I was called to perform the heroines, of course partake of the uncompromising

nature of all youthful verdicts. Hard, sharp, and shallow, they never went lower than the obvious surface of things, and dealt easily, after the undoubting youthful fashion, with a main result, without any misgiving as to conflicting causes or painful anxiety about contradictory component parts. At the beginning of life, the ignorant moral and intellectual standard alike have definite form and decided colour; time, as it goes on, dissolves the outline into vague indistinctness, and reveals lights and shades so various and innumerable, that towards the end of life criticism grows diffident, opinion difficult, and positive judgment almost impossible.

My first London season was now drawing to an end, and preparations were begun for a summer tour in the provinces. There had been some talk of my beginning with Brighton, but for some reason or other this fell through.

Bath, May 31, 1830.

My dear H——,

I have owed you an answer, and a most grateful one, for some time past, for your kindness in writing me so long a letter as your last; but when I assure you that, what with leave-taking, trying on dresses, making purchases, etc., etc., and all the preparations for our summer tour, this is the first moment in which I have been able to draw a long breath for the last month, I am sure you will forgive me, and believe, notwithstanding my long silence, that I was made very happy indeed by your letter. I bade Covent Garden and my dear London audience farewell on Friday last, when I acted Lady Townley

for the first time. The house was crammed, and as the proprietors had fixed that night for a second benefit which they gave me, I was very glad that it was so. I was very nicely dressed, and to my own fancy acted well, though I dare say my performance was a little flat occasionally. But considering my own physical powers, and the immense size of the theatre, I do not think I should have done better on the whole by acting more broadly; though I suppose it would have been more effective, I should have had to sacrifice something of repose and refinement to make it so. I was very sorry to leave my London audience: they welcomed my first appearance; they knew the history of our shipwrecked fortunes, and though perhaps not one individual amongst them would go a mile out of his way to serve us, there exists in them, taken collectively, a kind feeling and respect for my father, and an indulgent good-will towards me, which I do not hope to find elsewhere. I like Bath very much; I have not been here since I was six years old, when I spent a year here in hopes of being *bettered* by my aunt, Mrs. Twiss. A most forlorn hope it was. I suppose in human annals there never existed a more troublesome little brat than I was for the few years after my first appearance on this earthly stage.

This town reminds me a little of Edinburgh. How glad I shall be to see Edinburgh once more! I expect much pleasure, too, from the pleasure of my aunt Dall, who some years ago spent some very happy time in Edinburgh, and who loves it from association. And then, dear H——, I am looking forward to seeing you once more; I shall be with you

somewhere in the beginning of June. I have had my first rehearsal here this morning, "Romeo and Juliet;" the theatre is much smaller than Covent Garden, which rather inconveniences me, as a novelty, but the audience will certainly benefit by it. My fellow-labourers amuse me a good deal; their versions of Shakespeare are very droll. I wonder what your Irish ones will be. I am fortunate in my Romeo, inasmuch as he is one of my cousins; he has the family voice and manner very strongly, and at any rate does not murder the text of Shakespeare. I have no more time to spare now, for I must get my tea and go to the theatre. I must tell you, though, of an instance of provincial prudery (delicacy, I suppose I ought to call it) which edified us not a little at rehearsal this morning: the Mercutio, on seeing the nurse and Peter, called out, "A sail, a sail!" and terminated the speech in a significant whisper, which, being literally inaudible, my mother, who was with me on the stage, very innocently asked, "Oh, does the gentleman leave out the shirt and the smock?" upon which we were informed that "body linen" was not so much as to be hinted at before a truely refined Bath audience. How particular we are growing—*in word!* I am much afraid my father will shock them with the speech of that scamp Mercutio in all its pristine purity and precision. Good-bye, dear H——. Ever your affectionate

F. A. K.

P.S.—My mother desires to be particularly remembered to you. I want to revive Massinger's "Maid of Honour;" I want to act Camiola.

The necessity for carrying with us into the provinces a sufficient number of various parts, and especially of plays in which my father and myself could fill the principal characters, and so be tolerably independent of incompetent coadjutors, was the reason of my coming out in the play of "The Provoked Husband," before leaving London. The passage in this letter about Lady Townley sufficiently shows how bad my performance of it must have been, and how absolutely in the dark I was with regard to the real style in which the part should be played. The fine lady of my day, with the unruffled insipidity of her *low* spirits (high spirits never came near her) and the imperturbable composure of her smooth insolence, was as unlike the rantipole, racketing high-bred woman of fashion of Sir John Vanbrugh's play as the flimsy elegance of my silver-embroidered, rose-coloured tulle dress was unlike the elaborate splendour of her hooped and feathered and high-heeled, patched-and-powered magnificence, with its falling laces and standing brocades. The part of Lady Townley was not only beyond my powers, but has never been seen on the English stage since the days of Mrs. Abington and Miss Farren, the latter elegant and spirited actress being held by those who had seen both less like the original great lady than her predecessor; while even the Théâtre Français, where consummate study and reverend tradition of elder art still prevail, has lost more and more the secret of *la grande manière* in a gradual descent from the *grande dame* of Mademoiselle Contat to the pretty, graceful *femme comme il faut* of Mademoiselle Plessis; for even the exquisite Célimène of Mademoiselle Mars was but

a "pale reflex" of Molière's brilliant coquette, as played by her great instructress, Contat. The truth is, that society no longer possesses or produces that creature, and a good deal of reading, not of a usual or agreeable kind, would alone make one familiar enough with Lady Townley and her like to enable an actress of the present day to represent her with any verisimilitude. The absurd practice, too, of dressing all the serious characters of the piece in modern costume, and all the comic ones in that of the time at which it was written, renders the whole ridiculously incoherent and manifestly impossible, and destroys it as a picture of the manners of any time; for even stripped of her hoop and powder, and her more flagrant coarseness of speech, Lady Townley is still as unlike, in manners, language, and deportment, any modern lady, as she is unlike the woman of fashion of Hogarth's time, whose costume she has discarded.

The event fully justified my expectation of far less friendly audiences out of London than those I had hitherto made my appeals to. None of the personal interest that was felt for me there existed elsewhere, and I had to encounter the usual opposition, always prepared to cavil, in the provinces, at the metropolitan verdict of merit, as a mere exhibition of independent judgment; and to make good to the expectations of the country critics the highly laudatory reports of the London press, by which the provincial judges scorned to have a decision imposed upon them. Not unnaturally, therefore, I found a much less fervid enthusiasm in my audiences—who were, I dare say, quite justified in their disappointment—and a far less

eulogistic tone in the provincial press with regard to my performances. Our houses, however, were always very crowded, which was the essential point, and for my own part I was quite satisfied with the notices and applause which were bestowed on me. My cousin, John Mason, was the Romeo to whom I have referred in this letter. He was my father's sister's son, and, like so many members of our family, he and one of his brothers and his sister had made the stage their profession. He had some favourable physical qualifications for it: a rather striking face, handsome figure, good voice, and plenty of fire and energy; he was tolerably clever and well-informed, but without either imagination or refinement. My father, who thought there was the making of a good actor in him, was extremely kind to him.

Glasgow, Monday, June 28, 1830.

My dear Mrs. Jameson,

I believe that you will have felt too well convinced that I had not had a moment to spare, to be surprised at my not having sooner acknowledged your very kind letter; nothing but the incessant occupation of my time would so long have prevented me from doing so, but I embrace the opportunity which the king's death affords me of telling you how much obliged to you I was for writing to me, and writing as you did. I have little news to return you but what concerns myself, but I shall make no coquettish excuses about that, for I really believe 'tis the subject that will interest you most of any I could find. First, then, I am very well, rather tired, and sitting at an

inn window, in a dull, dark, handsome square in Glasgow. My fortnight in Edinburgh is over, and a short fortnight it has been, what with rehearsals, riding, sitting for my bust, and acting. The few hurried glimpses I have caught of my friends have been like dreams, and now that I have parted from them, no more to meet them there certainly, the whole seems to me like mere bewilderment, and I repeat to myself in my thoughts, hardly believing it, that the next time that I visit Edinburgh I shall not find the dear companionship of my cousins nor the fond affection of Mrs. Henry Siddons. This will be a severe loss to me; Edinburgh will, I fear, be without its greatest charm, and it will remain to be proved whether these lovely scenes that I have so admired and delighted in owed all their incomparable fascination to their intrinsic beauty, or to that most pleasurable frame of mind I enjoyed at the same time, the consciousness of the kind regard of the excellent human beings among whom I lived.

You will naturally expect me to say something of my theatrical experiences in the modern Athens. Our houses have been very fine, our audiences (as is their national nature) very cold; but upon the whole I believe they were well pleased with us, notwithstanding the damping influence of the newspapers, which have one and all been unfavourable to me. The death-like stillness of the audience, as it afforded me neither rest nor stimulus, distressed me a good deal; which, I think I need not tell you, the newspaper criticisms did not. I was surprised, in reading them, to find how very generally their strictures were confined

to my external disadvantages,—my diminutive stature and defective features; and that these far-famed northern critics discussed these rather than what I should have expected them to bestow their consideration upon, the dramatic artist's conception of character, and his (or her) execution of that conception. But had their verdicts been still more severe, I have a sufficient consolation in two notes of Sir Walter Scott's, written to the editor of one of the papers, Ballantyne, his own particular friend, which the latter sent me, and where he bears such testimony to my exertions as I do not care to transcribe, for fear my cheeks should reflect a lasting blush on my paper, but which I keep as a treasure and shall certainly show you with pride and pleasure when we meet.

Among the delightful occurrences of last week, I must record our breakfasting with Walter Scott. I was wonderfully happy. To whom, since Shakespeare, does the reading world owe so many hours of perfect, peaceful pleasure, of blessed forgetfulness of all things miserable and mean in its daily life? The party was a small but interesting one: Sir Walter and his daughter Anne, his old friend Sir Adam Fergusson and Lady Fergusson, and Miss Ferrier, the authoress of "Marriage" and "Inheritance," with both which capital books I hope, for your own sake, you are acquainted. Sir Walter was most delightful, and I even forgot all awful sense of his celebrity in his kind, cordial, and almost affectionate manner towards me. He is exceedingly like all the engravings, pictures, and busts of him with which one is familiar, and it seems strange that so varied and noble an intellect should be

expressed in the features of a shrewd, kindly, but not otherwise striking countenance. He told me several things that interested me very much; among others, his being present at the time when, after much searching, the regalia of Scotland was found locked up in a room in Edinburgh Castle, where, as he said, the dust of centuries had accumulated upon it, and where the ashes of fires lit more than two hundred years before were still lying in the grate. He told me a story that made me cry, of a poor old lady upwards of eighty years of age, who belonged to one of the great Jacobite families,—she was a Maxwell,—sending to him at the time the Scottish crown was found, to implore permission to see it but for one instant; which (although in every other case the same petition had been refused) was granted to her in consideration of her great age and the vital importance she seemed to attach to it. I never shall forget his describing her when first she saw it, appearing for a moment petrified at sight of it, and then tottering forward and falling down on her knees, and weeping and wailing over these poor remains of the royalty of her country as if it had been the dead body of her child.

Sir Adam Fergusson is a delightful person, whose quick, bustling manner forms a striking contrast to Walter Scott's quiet tone of voice and deliberate enunciation. I have also made acquaintance with Jeffrey, who came and called upon us the other morning, and, I hear, like other of his fellow-townsmen, complains piteously that I am not prettier. Indeed, I am very sorry for it, and I heartily wish I were; but I did not think him handsome either, and I wonder why he is

not handsomer? though I don't care so much about his want of beauty as he seems to do about mine. But I am running on at a tremendous rate, and quite forget that I have travelled upwards of forty miles to-day, and that I promised my mother, whenever I could, to go to bed early. Good-bye, my dear Mrs. Jameson. I hope you will be able to make out this scrawl, and to decipher that I am yours affectionately,

F. A. KEMBLE.

Of the proverbial frigidity of the Edinburgh public I had been forewarned, and of its probably disheartening effect upon myself. Mrs. Harry Siddons had often told me of the intolerable sense of depression with which it affected Mrs. Siddons, who, she said, after some of her grandest outbursts of passion, to which not a single expression of applause or sympathy had responded, exhausted and breathless with the effort she had made, would pant out in despair, under her breath, "Stupid people, stupid people!" Stupid, however, they undoubtedly were not, though, as undoubtedly, their want of excitability and demonstrativeness diminished their own pleasure by communicating itself to the great actress and partially paralysing her powers. That this habitual reserve sometimes gave way to very violent exhibitions of enthusiasm, the more fervent from its general repression, there is no doubt; and I think it was in Edinburgh that my friend, Mr. Harness, told me the whole of the sleep-walking scene in "Macbeth" had once been so vehemently encored that my aunt was literally obliged to go over it a second time, before the piece was allowed to proceed.

Scott's opinion of my acting, which would, of course, have been very valuable to me, let it have been what it would, was written to his friend and editor (*eheu!*), Ballantyne, who was also the editor of one of the principal Edinburgh papers, in which unfavourable criticisms of my performances had appeared, and in opposition to which Sir Walter Scott told him he was too hard upon me, and that for his part he had seen nothing so good since Mrs. Siddons. This encouraging verdict was courteously forwarded to me by Mr. Ballantyne himself, who said he was sure I would like to possess it. The first time I ever saw Walter Scott, my father and myself were riding slowly down Princes Street, up which Scott was walking; he stopped my father's horse, which was near the pavement, and desired to be introduced to me. Then followed a string of cordial invitations which previous engagements and our work at the theatre forbade our accepting, all but the pressing one with which he wound up, that we would at least come and breakfast with him. The first words he addressed to me as I entered the room were, "You appear to be a very good horsewoman, which is a great merit in the eyes of an old Border-man." Every *r* in which sentence was rolled into a combination of double *u* and double *r* by his Border burr, which made it memorable to me by this peculiarity of his pleasant speech. My previous acquaintance with Miss Ferrier's admirable novels would have made me very glad of the opportunity of meeting her, and I should have thought Sir Adam Fergusson delightfully entertaining, but that I could not bear to lose, while

listening to any one else, a single word spoken by Walter Scott.

I never can forget, however, the description Sir Adam Fergusson gave me of a morning he had passed with Scott at Abbotsford, which at that time was still unfinished, and, swarming with carpenters, painters, masons, and bricklayers, was surrounded with all the dirt and disorderly discomfort inseparable from the process of house-building. The room they sat in was in the roughest condition which admitted of their occupying it at all; the raw, new chimney smoked intolerably. Out-of-doors the whole place was one chaos of bricks, mortar, scaffolding, tiles, and slates. A heavy mist shrouded the whole landscape of lovely Tweed side, and distilled in a cold, persistent, and dumb drizzle. Maida, the well-beloved staghound, kept fidgeting in and out of the room, Walter Scott every five minutes exclaiming, "Eh, Adam! the puir brute's just wearying to get out;" or, "Eh, Adam! the puir creature's just crying to come in;" when Sir Adam would open the door to the raw, chilly air for the wet, muddy hound's exit or entrance, while Scott, with his face swollen with a grievous toothache, and one hand pressed hard to his cheek, with the other was writing the inimitably humorous opening chapters of "The Antiquary," which he passed across the table, sheet by sheet, to his friend, saying, "Now, Adam, d'ye think that'll do?" Such a picture of mental triumph over outward circumstances has surely seldom been surpassed: house-builders, smoky chimney, damp draughts, restless, dripping dog, and toothache, form what our friend, Miss Masson, called a "con-

catenation of exteriorities" little favourable to literary composition of any sort; but considered as accompaniments or inspiration of that delightfully comical beginning of "The Antiquary," they are all but incredible.

To my theatrical avocation I have been indebted for many social pleasures and privileges; among others, for Sir Walter Scott's notice and acquaintance; but among the things it has deprived me of was the opportunity of enjoying more of his honourable and delightful intercourse. A visit to Abbotsford, urged upon us most kindly, is one of the lost opportunities of my life that I think of always with bitter regret. Sir Walter wanted us to go down and spend a week with him in the country, and our professional engagements rendered it impossible for us to do so; and there are few things in my whole life that I count greater loss than the seven days I might have passed with that admirable genius and excellent, kind man, and had to forego. I never saw Abbotsford until after its master had departed from all earthly dwelling-places. I was staying in the neighbourhood, at the house of my friend, Mrs. M——, of Carolside, and went thither with her and my youngest daughter. The house was inhabited only by servants; and the housekeeper, whose charge it was to show it, waited till a sufficient number of tourists and sight-seers had collected, and then drove us all together from room to room of the house in a body, calling back those who outstripped her, and the laggers who would fain have fallen a few paces out of the sound of the dreary parrotry of her inventory of the contents of each

apartment. There was his writing-table and chair, his dreadnaught suit and thick walking shoes and staff there in the drawing-room; the table, fitted like a jeweller's counter, with a glass cover, protecting and exhibiting all the royal and precious tokens of honour and admiration, in the shape of orders, boxes, miniatures, etc., bestowed on him by the most exalted worshippers of his genius, hardly to be distinguished under the thick coat of dust with which the glass was darkened. Poor Anne Scott's portrait looked dolefully down on the strangers staring up at her, and, a glass door being open to the garden, Mrs. M—— and myself stepped out for a moment to recover from the miserable impression of sadness and desecration the whole thing produced on us; but the inexorable voice of the housekeeper peremptorily ordered us to return, as it would be, she said (and very truly), quite impossible for her to do her duty in describing the "curiosities" of the house, if visitors took upon themselves to stray about in every direction instead of keeping together and listening to what she was saying. How glad we were to escape from the sort of nightmare of the affair!

I returned there on another occasion, one of a large and merry party who had obtained permission to picnic in the grounds, but who, deterred by the threatening aspect of the skies from gipsying (as had originally been proposed) by the side of the Tweed, were allowed, by Sir Adam Fergusson's interest with the housekeeper, to assemble round the table in the dining-room of Abbotsford. Here, again, the past was so present with me as to destroy all enjoyment,

and, thinking how I might have had the great good fortune to sit there with the man who had made the whole place illustrious, I felt ashamed and grieved at being there then, though my companions were all kind, merry, good-hearted people, bent upon their own and each other's enjoyment. Sir Adam Fergusson had grown very old, and told no more the vivid anecdotes of former days; and to complete my mental discomfort, on the wall immediately opposite to me hung a strange picture of Mary Stuart's head, severed from the trunk and lying on a white cloth on a table, as one sees the head of John the Baptist in the charger, in pictures of Herodias's daughter. It was a ghastly presentation of the guillotined head of a pretty but rather common-looking French woman,—a fancy picture which it certainly would not have been my fancy to have presiding over my dinner-table.

Only once after this dreary party of pleasure did I return, many years later, to Abbotsford. I was alone, and the tourist season was over, and the sad autumnal afternoon offering little prospect of my being joined by other sight-seers, I prevailed with the housekeeper, who admitted me, to let me wander about the place, without entering the house; and I spent a most melancholy hour in the garden and in pacing up and down the terrace overlooking the Tweed side. The place was no longer inhabited at all; my ringing at the gate had brought, after much delay, a servant from Mr. Hope's new residence, built at some distance from Scott's house, and from her I learned that the proprietor of Abbotsford had withdrawn to the house he had erected for himself, leaving the poet's dwelling

exclusively as a place of pilgrimage for travellers and strangers, with not even a servant residing under its roof. The house abandoned to curious wayfarers; the sons and daughters, the grandson and granddaughter, every member of the founder's family dead; Mr. Hope remarried to a lady of the house of Arundel, and living in a semi-monastic seclusion in a house walled off from the tourist-haunted shrine of the great man whose memory alone was left to inhabit it,—all these circumstances filled me with indescribable sadness as I paced up and down in the gloaming, and thought of the strange passion for founding here a family of the old Border type which had obfuscated the keen, clear brain of Walter Scott, made his wonderful gifts subservient to the most futile object of ambition, driven him to the verge of disgrace and bankruptcy, embittered the evening of his laborious and glorious career, and finally ended in this,—the utter extinction of the name he had illustrated and the family he had hoped to found. And while his noble works remain to make his memory ever loved and honoured, this *Brummagem* mediæval mansion, this mock feudal castle with its imitation baronial hall (upon a diminutive scale) hung round with suits of armour, testifies to the utter perversity of good sense and good taste resulting from this one mental infirmity, this craving to be a Border chieftain of the sixteenth century instead of an Edinburgh lawyer of the nineteenth, and his preference for the distinction of a petty landholder to that of the foremost genius of his age. Mr. Combe, in speaking of this feudal insanity of Scott and the piteous havoc it

made of his life, told me that at one time he and Ballantyne, with whom he had entered into partnership, were staving off imminent ruin by indorsing and accepting each other's bills, and carried on that process to the extremest verge compatible with honesty. What a history of astounding success and utter failure!

Glasgow, July 3, 1830.

You will, ere this, my dear Mrs. Jameson, have received my very tardy reply to your first kind letter. I got your second last night at the theatre, just after I *had given away my jewels to Mr. Beverley.* I was much gratified by your profession of affection for me, for though I am not over-desirous of public admiration and approbation, I am anxious to secure the good-will of individuals whose intellect I admire, and on whose character I can with confidence rely. Your letter, however, made me uncomfortable in some respects; you seem unhappy and perplexed. I am sure you will believe me when I say that, without the remotest thought of intruding on the sacredness of private annoyances and distresses, I most sincerely sympathize in your uneasiness, whatever may be its cause, and earnestly pray that the cloud, which the two or three last times we met in London hung so heavily on your spirits, may pass away. It is not for me to say to you, "Patience," my dear Mrs. Jameson; you have suffered too much to have neglected that only remedy of our afflictions, but I trust Heaven will make it an efficacious one to you, and erelong send you less need of it. I am glad you see my

mother often, and very glad that to assist your recollection of me you find interest and amusement in discussing the fitting-up of my room with her. Pray do not forget that the drawing you made of the rooms in James Street is mine, and that when you visit me in my new abode it will be pleasant to have that remembrance before us of a place where we have spent some hours very happily together.

What you say of Mrs. N—— only echoes my own thoughts of her. She is a splendid creature, nobly endowed every way; too nobly to become through mere frivolity and foolish vanity the mark of the malice and envy of such *things* as she is surrounded by, and who will all eagerly embrace the opportunity of slandering one so immeasurably their superior in every respect. I do not know much of her, but I feel deeply interested in her; not precisely with the interest inspired by loving or even liking, but with that feeling of admiring solicitude with which one must regard a person so gifted, so tempted, and in such a position as hers. I am glad that lovely sister of hers is married, though matrimony in that world is not always the securest haven for a woman's virtue or happiness; it is sometimes in that society the reverse of an "honourable estate."

The poor king's death gave me a holiday on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and we eagerly embraced the opportunity its respite afforded us of visiting Loch Lomond and the entrance to Loch Long. As almost my first thought when we reached the lake was, "How can people attempt to describe such places?" I shall not terminate my letter with

"smooth expanses of sapphire-tinted waves," or "purple screens of heath-clad hills rising one above another into the cloudless sky." A volume might be written on the mere colour of the water, and give no idea of it, though you are the very person whose imagination, aided by all that you've seen, would best realize such a scene from description. It was heavenly, and we had such a perfect day! I prefer, however, the glimpse we had of Loch Long to what we saw of Loch Lomond. I brought away an appropriate nosegay from my trip, a white rose from Dumbarton, in memory of Mary Stuart, an oak branch from Loch Lomond, and a handful of heather, for which I fought with the bees on the rocky shore of Loch Long.

I like my Glasgow audience better than my Edinburgh one; they are not so cold. I look for a pleasant audience in your country, for which we set out to-morrow, I believe. My aunt desires to be remembered to you, and so does my father, and bids me add, in answer to your modest doubt, that you are a person to be always remembered with pleasure and esteem. I am glad you did not like my Bath miniature; indeed, it was not likely that you would.

Believe me always yours affectionately,

F. A. K.

During our summer tour my mother, who had remained in London, superintended the preparation of a new house, to which we removed on our return to town. My brother Henry's schooling at Westminster was over, which had been the reason for our taking

the house at Buckingham Gate, and, though it had proved a satisfactory residence in many respects, we were glad to exchange it for the one to which we now went, which had many associations that made it agreeable to my father, having been my uncle John's home for many years, and connected with him in the memory of my parents. It was the corner house of Great Russell Street and Montague Place, and, since we left it, has been included in the new court-yard of the British Museum (which was next door to it) and become the librarian's quarters, our friend Panizzi being its first occupant afterward. It was a good, comfortable, substantial house, the two pleasantest rooms of which, to me, were the small apartment on the ground floor, lined with books from floor to ceiling, and my own peculiar lodging in the upper regions, which, thanks to my mother's kindness and taste, was as pretty a bower of elegant comfort as any young spinster need have desired. There I chiefly spent my time, pursuing my favourite occupations, or in the society of my own especial friends: my dear H—— S——, when she was in London; Mrs. Jameson, who often climbed thither for an hour's pleasant discussion of her book on Shakespeare; and a lady with whom I now formed a very close intimacy, which lasted till her death, my dear E—— F——.

I had the misfortune to lose the water-colour sketches which Mrs. Jameson had made of our two drawing-rooms in James Street, Buckingham Gate. They were very pretty and skilful specimens of a difficult kind of subject, and valuable as her work, no less than as tokens of her regard for me. The beau-

tiful G—— S——, to whose marriage I have referred, had she not been a sister of her sisters, would have been considered a wit; and, in spite of this, was the greatest beauty of her day. She always reminded me of what an American once said in speaking of a countrywoman of his, that she was so lovely that when she came into the room she took his breath away. While I was in Bath I was asked by a young artist to sit for my miniature. His portrait had considerable merit as a piece of delicate, highly finished workmanship; it was taken in the part of Portia, and engraved; but I think no one, without the label underneath, would have imagined in it even the intention of my portrait. Whether or not the cause lay in my own dissimilar expressions and dissimilar aspects at different times, I do not know; but if a collection was made of the likenesses that have been taken of me, to the number of nearly thirty, nobody would ever imagine that they were intended to represent the same person. Certainly, my Bath miniature produced a version of my face perfectly unfamiliar to myself and most of my friends who saw it.

CHAPTER V.

Dublin, ——.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

I received your third kind letter yesterday morning, and have no more time to-day than will serve to enclose my answer to your second, which reached me and was replied to at Glasgow; owing to your not having given me your address, I had kept it thus long in my desk. You surely said nothing in that letter of yours that the kindest good feeling could take exception to, and therefore need hardly, I think, have been so anxious about its possible miscarriage. However, "Misery makes one acquainted with strange bedfellows," and I am afraid distrust is one of them. You will be glad, I know, to hear that I have been successful here, and perhaps amused to know that when your letter reached me yesterday, I was going, *en lionne*, to a great dinner-party at Lady Morgan's. You ask me for advice about your Shakespeare work, but advice is what I have no diploma for bestowing; and such suggestions as I might venture, were I sitting by your side with Shakespeare in my hand, and which might furnish pleasant matter of converse and dis-

cussion, are hardly solid enough for transmission by post.

I have been reading the "Tempest" all this afternoon, with eyes constantly dim with those delightful tears which are called up alike by the sublimity and harmony of nature, and the noblest creations of genius. I cannot imagine how you should ever feel discouraged in your work; it seems to me it must be its own perpetual stimulus and reward. Is not Miranda's exclamation, "O brave new world, that has such people in it!" on the first sight of the company of villainous men who ruined her and her father, with the royal old magician's comment, "'Tis new to thee!" exquisitely pathetic? I must go to my work; 'tis "The Gamester" to-night; I wish it were over. Good-bye, my dear Mrs. Jameson. Thank you for your kind letters; I value them very much, and am your affectionate

F. Kemble.

P.S.—I am very happy here, in the society of an admirable person who is as good as she is highly gifted,—a rare union,—and who, moreover, loves me well, which adds much, in my opinion, to her other merits. I mean my friend Miss S——.

My only reminiscence connected with this dinner at Lady Morgan's is of her kind and comical zeal to show me an Irish jig, performed *secundum artem*, when she found that I had never seen her national dance. She jumped up, declaring nobody danced it as well as herself, and that I should see it immediately; and began running through the rooms, with a gauze scarf that had fallen from her shoulders fluttering and

trailing after her, calling loudly for a certain young member of the vice-regal staff, who was among the guests invited to a large evening party after the dinner, to be her partner. But the gentleman had already departed (for it was late), and I might have gone to my grave unenlightened upon the subject of jigs if I had not seen one performed, to great perfection, by some gay young members of a family party, while I was staying at Worsley with my friends Lord and Lady Ellesmere, whose children and guests got up an impromptu ball on the occasion of Lady Octavia Grosvenor's birthday, in the course of which the Irish national dance was performed with great spirit, especially by Lord Mark Kerr and Lady Blanche Egerton. It resembles a good deal the saltarello of the Italian peasants in rhythm and character; and a young Irishman, servant of some friends of mine, covered himself with glory by the manner in which he joined a party of Neapolitan tarantella dancers, merely by dint of his proficiency in his own native jig. A great many years after my first acquaintance with Lady Morgan in Dublin, she renewed our intercourse by calling on me in London, where she was spending the season, and where I was then living with my father, who had become almost entirely deaf and was suffering from a most painful complication of maladies. My relations with the lively and amusing Irish authoress consisted merely in an exchange of morning visits, during one of which, after talking to me with voluble enthusiasm of Cardinal Gonsalvi and Lord Byron, whose portraits hung in her room, and who, she assured me, were her two pre-eminent heroes, she plied me with a breathless

series of pressing invitations to breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, evening parties, to meet everybody in London that I did and did not know, and upon my declining all these offers of hospitable entertainment (for I had at that time withdrawn myself entirely from society, and went nowhere), she exclaimed, "But what in the world do you *do* with yourself in the evening?" "Sit with my father, or remain alone," said I. "Ah!" cried the society-loving little lady, with an exasperated Irish accent, "come out of that *sphare* of solitary self-sufficiency *ye* live in, do! Come to me!" Which objurgation certainly presented in a most ludicrous light my life of very sad seclusion, and sent us both into fits of laughter.

I have alluded to a friendship which I formed soon after my appearance on the stage with Miss E—— F——. She was the daughter of Mr. F——, for many years member for Tiverton. Miss F—— and I perpetuated a close attachment already traditional between our families, her mother having been Mrs. Siddons's dearest friend. Indeed, for many years of her life, Mrs. F—— seems to me to have postponed the claims even of her husband and children upon her time and attention, to her absolute devotion to her celebrated idol. Mr. F—— was a dutiful member of the House of Commons, and I suppose his boy was at school and his girl too young to demand her mother's constant care and superintendence, at the time when she literally gave up the whole of her existence to Mrs. Siddons during the London season, passing her days in her society and her evenings in her dressing-room at the theatre, whenever Mrs. Siddons acted.

Miss F—— and myself could not dedicate ourselves with any such absolute exclusiveness to each other. Neither of our mothers would have consented to any such absorbing arrangement, for which a certain independence of family ties would have been indispensable; but within the limits which our circumstances allowed we were as devoted to each other as my aunt Siddons and Mrs. F—— had been, and our intercourse was as full and frequent as possible. E—— F—— was not pretty, but her face was expressive of both intelligence and sensibility; her figure wanted height, but was slender and graceful; her head was too small for powerful though not for keen and sagacious intellect, or for beauty. The general impression she produced was that of well-born and well-bred refinement, and she was as eager, light, and rapid in her movements as a greyhound, of which elegant animal the whole character of her appearance constantly reminded me.

Mr. F—— had a summer residence close to the picturesque town of Southampton, called Bannisters, the name of which charming place calls up the image of my friend swinging in her hammock under the fine trees of her lawn, or dexterously managing her boat on its tiny lake, and brings back delightful hours and days spent in happy intercourse with her. Mr. F—— had himself planned the house, which was as peculiar as it was comfortable and elegant. A small vestibule, full of fine casts from the antique (among others a rare original one of the glorious Neapolitan Psyche, given to his brother-in-law, Mr. William Hamilton, by the King of Naples), formed the

entrance. The oval drawing-room, painted in fresco by Mr. F——, recalled by its Italian scenes their wanderings in the south of Europe. In the adjoining room were some choice pictures, among others a fine copy of one of Titian's Venuses, and in the dining-room an equally good one of his Venus and Adonis. The place of honour, however, in this room was reserved for a life-size, full-length portrait of Mrs. Siddons, which Lawrence painted for Mrs. F——, and which is now in the National Gallery,—a production so little to my taste both as picture and portrait that I used to wonder how Mrs. F—— could tolerate such a representation of her admirable friend. The principal charm of Bannisters, however, was the garden and grounds, which, though of inconsiderable extent, were so skilfully and tastefully laid out, that their bounds were always invisible. The lawn and shrubberies were picturesquely irregular, and still retained some kindred, in their fine oaks and patches of heather, to the beautiful wild common which lay immediately beyond their precincts. A pretty piece of ornamental water was set in flowering bushes and well-contrived rockery, and in a more remote part of the grounds a little dark pond reflected wild-wood banks and fine overspreading elms and beeches. The small park had some charming clumps and single trees, and there was a twilight walk of gigantic overarching laurels, of a growth that dated back to a time of considerable antiquity, when the place had been part of an ancient monastery. Above all, I delighted in my friend E——'s favourite flower-garden, where her fine eye for colour revelled in group-

ing the softest, gayest, and richest masses of bloom, and where in a bay of mossy turf, screened round with evergreens, the ancient vision of love and immortality, the antique Cupid and Psyche, watched over the fragrant, flowery domain.

Sweet Bannisters! to me for ever a refuge of consolation and sympathy in seasons of trial and sorrow, of unfailing kindly welcome and devoted constant affection; haven of pleasant rest and calm repose whenever I resorted to it! How sad was my last visit to that once lovely and beloved place, now passed into the hands of strangers, deserted, divided, desecrated, where it was painful even to call up the image of her whose home it once was! The last time I saw Bannisters the grounds were parcelled out and let for grazing inclosures to various Southampton townspeople. The house was turned into a boys' boarding-school, and, as I hurried away, the shouts and acclamations of a roaring game of cricket came to me from the inclosure that had been E—— F——'s flower-garden; but though I was crying bitter tears the lads seemed very happy; the fashion of this world passeth away.

Before leaving Dublin for Liverpool, I had the pleasure of visiting my friend Miss S—— in her home, where I returned several times, and was always welcomed with cordial kindness. My last visit there took place during the Crimean war. My friend Mrs. T—— had become a widow, and her second son, now General T——, was with his regiment in the very front of the danger, and also surrounded by the first deadly outbreak of the cholera, which swooped with

such fatal fury upon our troops at the opening of the campaign. I can never forget the pathetic earnestness and solemnity of the prayers read aloud by that poor mother for the safety of our army, nor the accent with which she implored God's protection upon those exposed to such imminent peril in the noble discharge of their duty. That son was preserved to that mother, having manfully done his part in the face of the two-fold death that threatened him.

There was a slight circumstance attending Mrs. T——'s household devotions that charmed me greatly, and that I have never seen repeated anywhere else where I have assisted at family prayers. The servants, as they left the hall, bowed and courtesied to their mistress, who returned their salutation with a fine, old-fashioned courtesy, full of a sweet, kindly grace, that was delightful. This act of civility to her dependents was to me a perfect expression of Mrs. T——'s real antique toryism, as well as of her warm-hearted, motherly kindness of nature.

Ardgillan Castle (I think by courtesy, for it was eminently peaceful in character, in spite of the turret inhabited by my dear "moping owl," H——) was finely situated on an eminence from which the sea, with the picturesque fishing village of Skerries stretching into it on one side, and the Morne Mountains fading in purple distance beyond its blue waters on the other, formed a beautiful prospect. A pine wood on one side of the grounds led down to the foot of the grassy hill upon which the house stood, and to a charming wilderness called the Dell: a sylvan recess behind the rocky margin of the sea, from which it was

completely sheltered, whose hollow depth, carpeted with grass and curtained with various growth of trees, was the especial domain of my dear H——. A crystal spring of water rose in this "bosky dell," and answered with its tiny tinkle the muffled voice of the ocean breaking on the shore beyond. The place was perfectly lovely, and here we sat together and devised, as the old word was, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things above heaven, and things below earth, and things quite beyond ourselves, till we were well-nigh beside ourselves; and it was not the fault of my metaphysical friend, but of my utter inability to keep pace with her mental processes, if our argument did not include every point of that which Milton has assigned to the forlorn disputants of his infernal regions. My departure from Dublin ended these happy hours of companionship, and I exchanged that academe and my beloved Plato in petticoats for my play-house work at Liverpool. The following letter was in answer to one Mrs. Jameson wrote me upon the subject of a lady whom she had recommended to my mother as a governess for my sister, who was now in her sixteenth year.

Liverpool, August 16, 1830.

My dear Mrs. Jameson,

Were it not that I have a great opinion both of your kindness and reasonableness, I should feel rather uncomfortable at the period which has elapsed since I ought to have written to you; but I am very sorry not to have been able sooner to reply to your last kind letter. I shall begin by answering that

which interested me most in it, which you will easily believe was what regarded my dear A—— and the person into whose hands she is about to be committed. In proportion to the value of the gem is the dread one feels of the flaws and injuries it may receive in the process of cutting and polishing; and this, of course, not in this case alone, but that of every child who still is parent to the man (or woman). My mother said in one of her letters, "I have engaged a lady to be A——'s governess." Of course the *have* must make the expression of regret or anxiety undesirable, since both are unavailing. I hope it is the lady you spoke of in your letter to me, for I like very much the description you give of her, and in answer to the doubt you express as to whether *I* could be pleased with a person wanting in superficial brilliancy and refinement of intellect, I can reply unequivocally *yes*. I could be well pleased with such a person for my own companion, if the absence of such qualities were atoned for by sound judgment and sterling principle; and I am certain that such a person is best calculated to undertake the task which she is to perform in our house with good effect. The defect of our home education is that from the mental tendencies of all of us, no less than from our whole mode of life, the more imaginative and refined intellectual qualities are fostered in us in preference to our reasoning powers. We have all excitable natures, and, whether in head or heart, that is a disadvantage. The unrestrained indulgence of feeling is as injurious to moral strength as the undue excess of fancy is to mental vigour. I think young people would always be the better for the

influence of persons of strong sense, rather than strong sensibility, who, by fortifying their reason, correct any tendency to that morbid excitability which is so dangerous to happiness or usefulness.

I do not, of course, mean that one can eradicate any element of the original character—that I believe to be impossible; nor is direct opposition to natural tendencies of much use, for that is really cultivating qualities by resistance; but by encouraging other faculties, and by putting aside all that has a tendency to weaken and enervate, the mind will assume a robust and healthy tone, and the real feelings will acquire strength by being under reasonable control and by the suppression of factitious ones. A——'s education in point of accomplishments and general cultivation of taste and intellect is already fairly advanced; and the lady who is, I hope, now to be her companion and directress will be none the worse for wanting the merely ornamental branches of culture, provided she holds them at their due value, and neither *under* nor *over* estimates them because she is without them. I hope she is gentle and attractive in her manners, for it is essential that one should like as well as respect one's teachers; and should these qualities be added to the character you give of her, I am sure I should like her for a governess very much myself. You see by the room this subject has occupied in my letter how much it fills in my mind; human souls, minds, and bodies are precious and wonderful things, and to fit the whole creature for its proper aim here and hereafter, a solemn and arduous work.

Now to other matters. You reproach me very justly for my stupid oversight; I forgot to tell you which name appeared to me best for your book; the fact is, I flew off into ecstasies about the work itself, and gave you, I believe, a tirade about the "Tempest" instead of the opinion you asked. I agree with you that there is much in the name of a work; it is almost as desirable that a book should be well called as that it should be well written; a promising title-page is like an agreeable face, an inducement to further acquaintance, and an earnest of future pleasure. For myself, I prefer "Characters of Shakespeare's Women;" it is shorter, and I think will look better than the other in print.

I have been spending a few happy days, previous to my departure from Ireland, in a charming place and in the companionship of a person I love dearly. All my powers of enjoyment have been constantly occupied, and I have had a breathing-time of rest and real pleasure before I recommence my work. Such seasons are like angels' visits, but I suppose one ought to rejoice that they are allowed us at all, rather than complain of their brevity and infrequency. I am getting weary of wandering, and long to be once more settled at home.

What say you to this French revolution? Have not they made good use of their time, that in so few years from their last bloody national convulsion men's minds should so have advanced and expanded in France as to enable the people to overturn the government and change the whole course of public affairs with such comparative moderation and small loss of

life? I was still in Dublin when the news of the recent events in France reached us, and I never witnessed anything so like tipsiness as Lady Morgan's delight at it. I believe she wished herself a Frenchwoman with all her heart, and she declared she would go over as soon as her next work, which is in the hands of the publisher, was out. Were I a man, I should have been well pleased to have been in France some weeks ago; the rising of the nation against oppression and abuse, and the creating of a new and better state of things without any outbreak of popular excess, must have been a fine thing to see. But as a woman, incapable of mixing personally in such scenes, I would rather have the report of them at a distance than witness them as a mere inactive spectator; for though the loss of life has been comparatively small, considering the great end that has been achieved, it must be horrible to see bloodshed, even that of a single individual. I believe I am a great coward. I shall not close this to-night but wait till to-morrow, to tell you how my first appearance here goes off.

Tuesday, August 17th.

We had a very fine house indeed last night, and everything went off remarkably well. I had every reason to be satisfied with the audience, who, though proverbially a cold one, were exceedingly enthusiastic in their applause, which, I suppose, is the best indication that they were satisfied with me. Good-bye, my dear Mrs. Jameson; believe me yours ever truly,

F. A. K.

The intention of engaging a governess for my sister was not carried out, and she was taken to Paris and placed under the charge of Mrs. Foster, wife of the chaplain of the British embassy, under whose care she pursued her general education, while with the tuition of the celebrated Bordogni, the first singing-master of the day, she cultivated her fine voice and developed her musical genius.

The French Revolution of 1830, which placed Louis Philippe of Orleans on the throne, and sent Charles X. to end his days in an obscure corner of Germany, was the first of four revolutions which I have lived to witness; and since then I have often thought of a lady who, during the next political catastrophe, by which Louis Philippe was shaken out of his seat, showing Mrs. Grote the conveniences of a charming apartment in a central part of Paris, said, "Voici mon salon, voici ma salle à manger, et voyez comme c'est commode! De cette fenêtre je vois mes révolutions." The younger Bourbon of the Orleans branch had learned part of the lesson of government (of which even the most intelligent of that race seem destined never to learn the whole) in democratic America and democratic Switzerland. Perhaps it was in these two essentially *bourgeois* countries that he learned the only virtues that distinguished him as the *Roi Bourgeois, par excellence.*

Heaton Park, September 18, 1830.

My dear Mrs. Jameson,

Were it not that I should be ashamed to look you in the face when we meet, which I hope will now

be soon, I should be much tempted to defer thanking you for your last kind letter until that period, for I am at this moment in the bustle of three departures. My mother arrived in Manchester this morning, whence my aunt Dall starts to-night for Buckinghamshire, and my father to-morrow morning at seven o'clock for London, and at eight my mother and myself start for Liverpool. I am most anxious to be there for the opening of the railroad, which takes place on Wednesday. I act in Manchester on Friday, and after that we shall spend some days with Lord and Lady W——, at their seat near there; and then I return to London to begin my winter campaign, when I hope to see you less oppressed with anxiety and vexation than you were when we parted there. And now, what shall I say to you? My life for the last three weeks has been so hurried and busy that, while I have matter for many long letters, I have hardly time for condensation; you know what Madame de Sévigné says, "Si j'avais eu plus de temps, je t'aurais écrit moins longuement." I have been sight-seeing and acting for the last month, and the first occupation is really the more exhausting of the two. I will give you a *carte*, and when we meet you shall call upon me for a detail of any or all of its contents.

I have seen the fine, picturesque old town of Chester; I have seen Liverpool, its docks, its cemetery, its railway, on which I was flown away with by a steam-engine, at the rate of five and thirty miles an hour; I have seen Manchester, power-looms, spinning-jennies, cotton factories, etc.; I have stayed at the pleasant modern mansion of Heaton; I have visited Hopwood

Hall, built in the reign of Edward the First, and still retaining its carved old oaken chimneys and panelled chambers and latticed windows, and intricate ups and downs of internal architecture, to present use apparently as purposeless and inconvenient as if one was living in a cat's-cradle. I have seen a rush-bearing with its classical morris dance, executed in honour of some antique observance by the country folk of Lancashire, with whom this commemoration, but no knowledge of its original significance, remains. I have seen Birmingham, its button-making, pin-making, plating, stamping, etc.; I have seen Aston Hall, an old house two miles from the town, and two hundred from everything in it, where Charles the First slept after the battle of Edge Hill, and whose fine old staircase still retains the marks of Cromwell's cannon,—which house, moreover, possesses an oaken gallery one hundred and odd feet long, hung with old portraits, one of the most delightful apartments imaginable. How I did sin in envy, and long for that nice room to walk up and down and dream and poetize in; but as I know of no earthly way of compassing this desirable acquisition but offering myself in exchange for it to its present possessor (who might not think well of the bargain), *il n'y faut plus penser*. Moreover, as the grapes are sour, I conclude that upon the whole it might not be an advantageous one for me. I am at this moment writing in a drawing-room full of people, at Heaton (Lord W——'s place), taking up my pen to talk to you and laying it down to talk to others. I must now, however, close my double and divided conversation, because I have not brains enough

to play at two games at once. I am ever yours, very sincerely,

F. A. K.

While we were acting at Liverpool, an experimental trip was proposed upon the line of railway which was being constructed between Liverpool and Manchester, the first mesh of that amazing iron net which now covers the whole surface of England and all the civilized portions of the earth. The Liverpool merchants, whose far-sighted self-interest prompted them to wise liberality, had accepted the risk of George Stephenson's magnificent experiment, which the committee of inquiry of the House of Commons had rejected for the government. These men, of less intellectual culture than the parliament members, had the adventurous imagination proper to great speculators, which is the poetry of the counting-house and wharf, and were better able to receive the enthusiastic infection of the great projector's sanguine hope than the Westminster committee. They were exultant and triumphant at the near completion of the work, though, of course, not without some misgivings as to the eventual success of the stupendous enterprise. My father knew several of the gentlemen most deeply interested in the undertaking, and Stephenson having proposed a trial trip as far as the fifteen-mile viaduct, they, with infinite kindness, invited him and permitted me to accompany them; allowing me, moreover, the place which I felt to be one of supreme honour, by the side of Stephenson. All that wonderful history, as much more interesting than a romance as truth is stranger than fiction,

which Mr. Smiles's biography of the projector has given in so attractive a form to the world, I then heard from his own lips. He was a rather stern-featured man, with a dark and deeply marked countenance; his speech was strongly inflected with his native Northumbrian accent, but the fascination of that story told by himself, while his tame dragon flew panting along his iron pathway with us, passed the first reading of the "Arabian Nights," the incidents of which it almost seemed to recall. He was wonderfully condescending and kind in answering all the questions of my eager ignorance, and I listened to him with eyes brimful of warm tears of sympathy and enthusiasm, as he told me of all his alternations of hope and fear, of his many trials and disappointments, related with fine scorn how the "Parliament men" had badgered and baffled him with their book-knowledge, and how, when at last they thought they had smothered the irrepressible prophecy of his genius in the quaking depths of Chatmoss, he had exclaimed, "Did ye ever see a boat float on water? I will make my road float upon Chatmoss!" The well-read Parliament men (some of whom, perhaps, wished for no railways near their parks and pleasure-grounds) could not believe the miracle, but the shrewd Liverpool merchants, helped to their faith by a great vision of immense gain, did; and so the railroad was made, and I took this memorable ride by the side of its maker, and would not have exchanged the honour and pleasure of it for one of the shares in the speculation.

Liverpool, August 26th.

My dear H——,

A common sheet of paper is enough for love, but a foolscap extra can alone contain a railroad and my ecstasies. There was once a man, who was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who was a common coal-digger; this man had an immense constructiveness, which displayed itself in pulling his watch to pieces and putting it together again; in making a pair of shoes when he happened to be some days without occupation; finally—here there is a great gap in my story—it brought him in the capacity of an engineer before a committee of the House of Commons, with his head full of plans for constructing a railroad from Liverpool to Manchester. It so happened that to the quickest and most powerful perceptions and conceptions, to the most indefatigable industry and perseverance, and the most accurate knowledge of the phenomena of nature as they affect his peculiar labours, this man joined an utter want of the "gift of the gab;" he could no more explain to others what he meant to do and how he meant to do it, than he could fly; and therefore the members of the House of Commons, after saying, "There is rock to be excavated to a depth of more than sixty feet, there are embankments to be made nearly to the same height, there is a swamp of five miles in length to be traversed, in which if you drop an iron rod it sinks and disappears: how will you do all this?" and receiving no answer but a broad Northumbrian "I can't tell you how I'll do it, but I can tell you I *will* do it," dismissed Stephenson as a visionary. Having prevailed upon

a company of Liverpool gentlemen to be less incredulous, and having raised funds for his great undertaking, in December of 1826 the first spade was struck into the ground. And now I will give you an account of my yesterday's excursion. A party of sixteen persons was ushered into a large court-yard, where, under cover, stood several carriages of a peculiar construction, one of which was prepared for our reception. It was a long-bodied vehicle with seats placed across it, back to back; the one we were in had six of these benches, and was a sort of uncovered *char à banc*. The wheels were placed upon two iron bands, which formed the road, and to which they are fitted, being so constructed as to slide along without any danger of hitching or becoming displaced, on the same principle as a thing sliding on a concave groove. The carriage was set in motion by a mere push, and, having received this impetus, rolled with us down an inclined plane into a tunnel, which forms the entrance to the railroad. This tunnel is four hundred yards long (I believe), and will be lighted by gas. At the end of it we emerged from darkness, and, the ground becoming level, we stopped. There is another tunnel parallel with this, only much wider and longer, for it extends from the place which we had now reached, and where the steam-carriages start, and which is quite out of Liverpool, the whole way under the town, to the docks. This tunnel is for waggons and other heavy carriages; and as the engines which are to draw the trains along the railroad do not enter these tunnels, there is a large building at this entrance which is to be inhabited by steam-engines of a stationary turn of mind, and

different constitution from the travelling ones, which are to propel the trains through the tunnels to the terminus in the town, without going out of their houses themselves. The length of the tunnel parallel to the one we passed through is (I believe) two thousand two hundred yards. I wonder if you are understanding one word I am saying all this while! We were introduced to the little engine which was to drag us along the rails. She (for they make these curious little fire-horses all mares) consisted of a boiler, a stove, a small platform, a bench, and behind the bench a barrel containing enough water to prevent her being thirsty for fifteen miles,—the whole machine not bigger than a common fire-engine. She goes upon two wheels, which are her feet, and are moved by bright steel legs called pistons; these are propelled by steam, and in proportion as more steam is applied to the upper extremities (the hip-joints, I suppose) of these pistons, the faster they move the wheels; and when it is desirable to diminish the speed, the steam, which unless suffered to escape would burst the boiler, evaporates through a safety-valve into the air. The reins, bit, and bridle of this wonderful beast is a small steel handle, which applies or withdraws the steam from its legs or pistons, so that a child might manage it. The coals, which are its oats, were under the bench, and there was a small glass tube affixed to the boiler, with water in it, which indicates by its fulness or emptiness when the creature wants water, which is immediately conveyed to it from its reservoirs. There is a chimney to the stove, but as they burn coke there is none of the dreadful black smoke which accompanies the pro-

gress of a steam-vessel. This snorting little animal, which I felt rather inclined to pat, was then harnessed to our carriage, and, Mr. Stephenson having taken me on the bench of the engine with him, we started at about ten miles an hour. The steam-horse being ill adapted for going up and down hill, the road was kept at a certain level, and appeared sometimes to sink below the surface of the earth, and sometimes to rise above it. Almost at starting it was cut through the solid rock, which formed a wall on either side of it, about sixty feet high. You can't imagine how strange it seemed to be journeying on thus, without any visible cause of progress other than the magical machine, with its flying white breath and rhythmical, unvarying pace, between these rocky walls, which are already clothed with moss and ferns and grasses; and when I reflected that these great masses of stone had been cut asunder to allow our passage thus far below the surface of the earth, I felt as if no fairy tale was ever half so wonderful as what I saw. Bridges were thrown from side to side across the top of these cliffs, and the people looking down upon us from them seemed like pigmies standing in the sky. I must be more concise, though, or I shall want room. We were to go only fifteen miles, that distance being sufficient to show the speed of the engine, and to take us on to the most beautiful and wonderful object on the road. After proceeding through this rocky defile, we presently found ourselves raised upon embankments ten or twelve feet high; we then came to a moss, or swamp, of considerable extent, on which no human foot could tread without sinking, and yet it bore the

road which bore us. This had been the great stumbling-block in the minds of the committee of the House of Commons; but Mr. Stephenson has succeeded in overcoming it. A foundation of hurdles, or, as he called it, basket-work, was thrown over the morass, and the interstices were filled with moss and other elastic matter. Upon this the clay and soil were laid down, and the road *does* float, for we passed over it at the rate of five and twenty miles an hour, and saw the stagnant swamp water trembling on the surface of the soil on either side of us. I hope you understand me. The embankment had gradually been rising higher and higher, and in one place, where the soil was not settled enough to form banks, Stephenson had constructed artificial ones of wood-work, over which the mounds of earth were heaped, for he said that though the wood-work would rot, before it did so the banks of earth which covered it would have been sufficiently consolidated to support the road.

We had now come fifteen miles, and stopped where the road traversed a wide and deep valley. Stephenson made me alight and led me down to the bottom of this ravine, over which, in order to keep his road level, he has thrown a magnificent viaduct of nine arches, the middle one of which is seventy feet high, through which we saw the whole of this beautiful little valley. It was lovely and wonderful beyond all words. He here told me many curious things respecting this ravine: how he believed the Mersey had once rolled through it; how the soil had proved so unfavourable for the foundation of his bridge that it was built upon piles, which had been driven

into the earth to an enormous depth; how, while digging for a foundation, he had come to a tree bedded in the earth fourteen feet below the surface of the ground; how tides are caused, and how another flood might be caused; all of which I have remembered and noted down at much greater length than I can enter upon it here. He explained to me the whole construction of the steam-engine, and said he could soon make a famous engineer of me, which, considering the wonderful things he *has* achieved, I dare not say is impossible. His way of explaining himself is peculiar, but very striking, and I understood, without difficulty, all that he said to me. We then rejoined the rest of the party, and the engine having received its supply of water, the carriage was placed behind it, for it cannot turn, and was set off at its utmost speed, thirty-five miles an hour, swifter than a bird flies (for they tried the experiment with a snipe). You cannot conceive what that sensation of cutting the air was; the motion is as smooth as possible, too. I could either have read or written; and as it was, I stood up, and with my bonnet off "drank the air before me." The wind, which was strong, or perhaps the force of our own thrusting against it, absolutely weighed my eyelids down. [I remember a similar experience to this, the first time I attempted to go behind the sheet of the cataract of Niagara; the wind coming from beneath the waterfall met me with such direct force that it literally bore down my eyelids, and I had to put off the attempt of penetrating behind the curtain of foam till another day, when that peculiar accident was less directly hostile to me in its condi-

tions.] When I closed my eyes this sensation of flying was quite delightful, and strange beyond description; yet, strange as it was, I had a perfect sense of security, and not the slightest fear. At one time, to exhibit the power of the engine, having met another steam-carriage which was unsupplied with water, Mr. Stephenson caused it to be fastened in front of ours; moreover, a waggon laden with timber was also chained to us, and thus propelling the idle steam-engine, and dragging the loaded waggon which was beside it, and our own carriage full of people behind, this brave little she-dragon of ours flew on. Farther on she met three carts, which, being fastened in front of her, she pushed on before her without the slightest delay or difficulty; when I add that this pretty little creature can run with equal facility either backwards or forwards, I believe I have given you an account of all her capacities.

Now for a word or two about the master of all these marvels, with whom I am most horribly in love. He is a man of from fifty to fifty-five years of age; his face is fine, though careworn, and bears an expression of deep thoughtfulness; his mode of explaining his ideas is peculiar and very original, striking, and forcible; and although his accent indicates strongly his north-country birth, his language has not the slightest touch of vulgarity or coarseness. He has certainly turned my head.

Four years have sufficed to bring this great undertaking to an end. The railroad will be opened upon the 15th of next month. The Duke of Wellington is coming down to be present on the occasion, and, I suppose,

what with the thousands of spectators and the novelty of the spectacle, there will never have been a scene of more striking interest. The whole cost of the work (including the engines and carriages) will have been eight hundred and thirty thousand pounds; and it is already worth double that sum. The directors have kindly offered us three places for the opening, which is a great favour, for people are bidding almost anything for a place, I understand; but I fear we shall be obliged to decline them, as my father is most anxious to take Henry over to Heidelberg before our season of work in London begins, which will take place on the first of October. I think there is every probability of our having a very prosperous season. London will be particularly gay this winter, and the king and queen, it is said, are fond of dramatic entertainments, so that I hope we shall get on well. You will be glad to hear that our houses here have been very fine, and that to-night, Friday, which was my benefit, the theatre was crowded in every corner. We do not play here any more, but on Monday we open at Manchester. You will, I know, be happy to hear that, by way of answer to the letter I told you I had written my mother, I received a very delightful one from my dear little sister, the first I have had from her since I left London. She is a little jewel, and it will be a sin if she is marred in the cutting and polishing, or if she is set in tawdry French pinchbeck, instead of fine, strong, sterling gold. I am sorry to say that the lady Mrs. Jameson recommended as her governess has not been thought sufficiently accomplished to undertake the charge. I regret this the more, as in a letter I have just received

from Mrs. Jameson she speaks with more detail of this lady's qualifications, which seem to me peculiarly adapted to have a good effect upon such a mind and character as A——'s.

I wish I had been with your girls at their ball, and come back from it and found you holding communion with the skies. My dearest H——, sublime and sweet and holy as are the feelings with which I look up to the star-paved heavens, or to the glorious summer sun, or listen to the music of the great waves, I do not for an instant mistake the adoration of the almighty power manifested in these works of God, for religion. You tell me to beware of mixing up emotional or imaginative excitement with my devotion. And I think I can truly answer that I do not do so. I told you that the cathedral service was not prayer to me; nor do I ever confound a mere emotional or imaginative enthusiasm, even when excited by the highest of all objects of contemplation, with the daily and hourly endeavour after righteousness—the humble trust, resignation, obedience, and thankfulness, which I believe constitute the vital part of religious faith. I humbly hope I keep the sacred ground of my religion clear from whatever does not belong to the spirit of its practice. As long as I can remember, I have endeavoured to guard against mistaking emotion for religion, and have even sometimes been apprehensive lest the admiration I felt for certain passages in the Psalms and the Hebrew prophets should make me forget the more solemn and sacred purposes of the book of life, and the glad tidings of our salvation. And though, when I look up as you did at the worlds

with which our midnight sky is studded, I feel inclined to break out, "The heavens declare the glory of God," or, when I stand upon the shore, can hardly refrain from crying aloud, "The sea is His, and He made it," I do not in these moments of sublime emotion forget that He is the God to whom all hearts be open; who, from the moment I rise until I lie down to rest, witnesses my every thought and feeling; to whom I look for support against the evil of my own nature and the temptations which He allots me, who bestows every blessing and inspires every good impulse, who will strengthen me for every duty and trial: my Father, in whom I live and move and have my being. I do not fear that my imagination will become over-excited with thoughts such as these, but I often regret most bitterly that my heart is not more deeply touched by them. Your definition of the love of God seemed almost like a reproach to my conscience. How miserably our practice halts behind our knowledge of good, even when tried at the bar of our own lenient judgment, and by our imperfect standard of right! how poorly does our life answer to our profession! I should speak in the singular, for I am only uttering my own self-condemnation. But as the excellence we adore surpasses our comprehension, so does the mercy, and in that lies our only trust and confidence.

I fear Miss W—— either has not received my letter or does not mean to answer it, for I have received no reply, and I dare not try again. Up to a certain point I am impudent enough, but not beyond that. Why do you threaten me with dancing to me? Have I lately given you cause to think I deserve to have such a

punishment hung *in terrorem* over me? Besides, threatening me is injudicious, for it rouses a spirit of resistance in me not easy to break down. I assure you *o* [in allusion to my mispronunciation of that vowel] is really greatly improved. I take much pains with it, as also with my deportment; they will, I hope, no longer annoy you when next we meet. You must not call Mrs. J—— my friend, for I do not. I like her much, and I see a great deal to esteem and admire in her, but I do not *yet* call her my friend. You are my friend, and Mrs. Harry Siddons is my friend, and you are the only persons I call by that name. I have read "Paul Clifford," according to your desire, and like it very much; it is written with a good purpose, and very powerfully. You asked me if I believed such selfishness as Brandon's to be natural, and I said yes, not having read the book, but merely from your report of him; and, having read the book, I say so still.

CHAPTER VI.

Dublin, August, 1830.

My dear H——,

I should have answered your letter sooner had I before been able to give you any certain intelligence of our theatrical proceedings next week, but I was so afraid of some change taking place in the list of the plays that I resolved not to write until alteration was impossible. The plays for next week are on Monday, "Venice Preserved;" on Wednesday, "The Grecian Daughter;" Thursday, "The Merchant of Venice." I wish your people may be able to come up, the latter end of the week; I think "Romeo and Juliet," and "The Merchant of Venice," are nice plays for them to see. But you have, I know, an invitation from Mrs. J—— to come into town on Monday. I do not know whether my wishes have at all influenced her in this, but she has my very best thanks for it, and I know that they will have some weight with you in inclining you to accept it; do, my dearest H——, come if you can. I shall certainly not be able to return to Ardgillan, and so my only chance of seeing you depends upon your coming into Dublin. I wish I had been with you when you sat in the sun and listened to the wind singing over the

sea. I have a great admiration for the wind, not so much for its purifying influences only, as for its invisible power, strength, the quality above all others without which there is neither moral nor mental greatness possible. Natural objects endowed with this invisible power please me best, as human beings who possess it attract me most; and my preference for it over other elements of character is because I think it communicates itself, and that while in contact with it one feels as if it were *catching;* and whether by the shore, when the tide is coming up fast and irresistible, or in the books or intercourse of other minds, it seems to rouse corresponding activity and energy in one's self, persuading one, for the time being, that one is strong. I am sure I have felt taller by three inches, as well as three times more vigorous in body and mind, than I really am, when running by the sea. It seemed as if that great mass of waters, as it rushed and roared by my side, was communicating power directly to my mind as well as my bodily frame, by its companionship. I wish I was on the shore now with you. It is surprising (talking of E——) how instantaneously, and by what subtle, indescribable means, certain qualities of individual natures make themselves felt,—refinement, imagination, poetical sensibility. People's voices, looks, and gestures betray these so unconsciously; and I think more by the manner, a great deal, than the matter of their speech. Refinement, particularly, is a wonfully subtle, penetrating element; nothing is so positive in its effect, and nothing so completely escapes analysis and defies description.

I am glad dear little H—— thought I "grew pretty;" there is a world of discrimination in that sentence of his. To your charge that I should cultivate my judgment in preference to my imagination, I can only answer, "I am ready and willing to do so;" but it is nevertheless not altogether easy for me to do it. My life in London leaves me neither time nor opportunity for any self-culture, and it seems to me as if my best faculties were lying fallow, while a comparatively unimportant talent, and my physical powers, were being taxed to the uttermost. The profession I have embraced is supposed to stimulate powerfully the imagination. I do not find it so; it appeals to mine in a slight degree compared with other pursuits; it is too definite in its object and too confined in its scope to excite my imagination strongly; and, moreover, it carries with it the antidote of its own excitement in the necessary conditions under which it is exercised. Were it possible to act with one's *mind* alone, the case might be different; but the body is so indispensable, unluckily, to the execution of one's most poetical conceptions on the stage, that the imaginative powers are under very severe though imperceptible restraint. Acting seems to me rather like dancing hornpipes in fetters. And by no means the least difficult part of the business is to preserve one's own feelings warm, and one's imagination excited, whilst one is aiming entirely at producing effects upon others; surrounded, moreover, as one is, by objects which, while they heighten the illusion to the distant spectator, all but destroy it to us of the *dramatis personæ*. None of this, however, lessens

the value and importance of your advice, or my own conviction that "mental bracing" is good for me. My reception on Monday was quite overpowering, and I was escorted back to the hotel, after the play, by a body-guard of about two hundred men, shouting and hurrahing like mad; strange to say, they were people of perfectly respectable appearance. My father was not with us, and they opened the carriage door and let down the steps, when we got home, and helped us out, clapping, and showering the most fervent expressions of good-will upon me and aunt Dall, whom they took for my mother. One young man exclaimed pathetically, "Oh, I hope ye're not too much fatigued, Miss Kemble, by your exertions!" They formed a line on each side of me, and several of them dropped on their knees to look under my bonnet, as I ran laughing, with my head down, from the carriage to the house. I was greatly confused and a little frightened, as well as amused and gratified, by their cordial demonstration.

The humours of a Dublin audience, much as I had heard of them before going to Ireland, surprised and diverted me very much. The second night of our acting there, as we were leaving the theatre by the private entrance, we found the carriage surrounded by a crowd eagerly waiting for our coming out. As soon as my father appeared, there was a shout of "Three cheers for Misther Char-*les!*" then came Dall, and "Three cheers for Misthriss Char-*les!*" then I, and "Three cheers for Miss Fanny!" "Bedad, she looks well by gas-light!" exclaimed one of my admirers. "Och, and bedad, she looks well by daylight

too!" retorted another, though what his opportunity for forming that flattering opinion of the genuineness of my good looks had been, I cannot imagine. What further remarks passed upon us I do not know, as we drove off laughing, and left our friends still vociferously cheering. My father told us one day of his being followed up Sackville Street by two beggar-women, between whom the following dialogue passed, evidently with a view to his edification: "Och, but he's an iligant man, is Misther Char-*les* Kemble!" "An' 'deed, so was his brudher Misther John, thin—a moighty foine man! and to see his *demanour*, puttin' his hand in his pocket and givin' me sixpence, bate all the worrld!" When I was acting Lady Townley, in the scene where her husband complains of her late hours and she insolently retorts, "I won't come home till four, to-morrow morning," and receives the startling reply with which Lord Townley leaves her, "Then, madam, you shall never come home again," I was apt to stand for a moment aghast at this threat; and one night during this pause of breathless dismay, one of my gallery auditors, thinking, I suppose, that I was wanting in proper spirit not to make some rejoinder, exclaimed, "Now thin, Fanny!" which very nearly upset the gravity produced by my father's impressive exit, both in me and in the audience.

Dublin, Friday, August 6, 1830.

My dearest H——,

I fear I caused you a disappointment by not writing to you yesterday afternoon, but as it was not

until between five and six o'clock that I learned we were not going to Cork, when I thought of writing you to that effect I found I was too late for the post. I hope still that Dall and I may be able to come to Ardgillan again, but we cannot leave my father alone here, and his departure for Liverpool is at present quite uncertain. I have been trying to reason myself into patience, notwithstanding a very childish inclination to cry about it, which I think I will indulge because I shall be able to be so much more reasonable without this stupid lump in my throat.

I hope I may see you again, dear H——. You are wrong when you say you cannot be of service to me; I can judge better of the value of your intercourse to me than you can, and I wish I could have the advantage of more of it before I plunge back into "toil and trouble." I have two very opposite feelings about my present avocation: utter dislike to it and everything connected with it, and an upbraiding sense of ingratitude when I reflect how prosperous and smooth my entrance upon my career has been. I hope, ere long, to be able to remember habitually what only occasionally occurs to me now, as a comfort and support, that since it was right for me to embrace this profession, it is incumbent upon me to banish all selfish regrets about the surrender of my personal tastes and feelings, which must be sacrificed to real and useful results for myself and others. You see, I write as I talk, still about myself; and I am sometimes afraid that my very desire to improve keeps me occupied too much about myself and will make a little moral egotist of me. I am going to bid good-bye to

Miss W—— this morning; I should like her to like me; I believe I should value her friendship as I ought. Good friends are like the shrubs and trees that grow on a steep ascent: while we toil up, and our eyes are fixed on the summit, we unconsciously grasp and lean upon them for support and assistance on our way. God bless you, dear H——. I hope to be with you soon, but cannot say at present how soon that may be.

F. A. K.

A very delightful short visit to my friend at Ardgillan preceded my resuming my theatrical work at Liverpool, whence I wrote her the following letter:—

Liverpool, August 19, 1830.

Dear H——,

I received your letter about an hour ago, at rehearsal, and though I read it with rather dim eyes, I managed to swallow my tears, and go on with Mrs. Beverley.

The depth and solemnity of your feelings, my dear H——, on those important subjects of which we have so often spoken together, almost make me fear, sometimes, that I am not so much impressed as I ought to be with their *awfulness*. I humbly hope I *fear* as I ought, but it is so much easier for me to love than to fear, that my nature instinctively fastens on those aspects of religion which inspire confidence and impart support, rather than those which impress with dread. I was thinking the other day how constantly in all our prayers the loftiest titles of might are added

to that Name of names, "Our Father," and yet His power is always less present to my mind than His mercy and love. You tell me I do not know you, and that may very well be, for one really *knows* no one; and when I reflect upon and attempt to analyse the various processes of my own rather shallow mind, and find them incomprehensible, I am only surprised that there should be so much mutual affection in a world where mutual knowledge and understanding are really impossible.

My side-ache was much better yesterday. I believe it was caused by the pain of leaving you and Ardgillan: any strong emotion causes it, and I remember when I last left Edinburgh having an attack of it that brought on erysipelas. You say you wish to know how Juliet does. Why, very well, poor thing. She had a very fine first house indeed, and her success has been as great as you could wish it; out of our ten nights' engagement, "Romeo and Juliet" is to be given four times; it has already been acted three successive nights to very great houses. To-night it is "The Gamester," to-morrow "Venice Preserved," and on Saturday we act at Manchester, and on Monday here again. You will hardly imagine how irksome it was to me to be once more in my stage-trappings, and in the glare of the theatre instead of the blessed sunshine in the country, and to hear the murmur of congregated human beings instead of that sound of many waters, that wonderful sea-song, that is to me like the voice of a dear friend. I made a great effort to conquer this feeling of repugnance to my work, and thought of my dear Mrs. Harry, whom I have seen, with

a heart and mind torn with anxiety, leave poor Lizzy on what seemed almost a death-bed, to go and do her duty at the theatre. That was something like a trial. There was a poor old lady, of more than seventy years of age, who acted as my nurse, who helped also to rouse me from my selfish morbidness—age and infirmity labouring in the same path with rather more cause for weariness and disgust than I have. She may have been working, too, only for herself, while I am the means of helping my own dear people, and many others; she toils on, unnoticed and neglected, while my exertions are stimulated and rewarded by success and the approval of every one about me. And yet my task is sadly distasteful to me; it seems such useless work that but for its very useful pecuniary results I think I would rather make shoes. You tell me of the comfort you derive, under moral depression, from picking stones and weeds out of your garden. I am afraid that antidote would prove insufficient for me; the weeds would very soon lie in heaps in my lap, and the stones accumulate in little mountains all round me, while my mind was sinking into contemplations of the nature of *slow quicksands*. Violent bodily exercise, riding, or climbing up steep and rugged pathways are my best remedies for the blue devils.

My father has received a pressing invitation from Lord and Lady W—— to go to their place, Heaton, which is but five miles from Manchester.

You say to me in your last letter that you could not live at the rate I do; but my life is very different now from what it was while with you. I am silent and quiet and oppressed with irksome duties, and alto-

gether a different creature from your late companion by the sea-shore. It is true that *that* was my natural condition, but if you were here with me now, in the midst of all these unnatural sights and sounds, I do not think I should weary you with my overflowing life and spirits, as I fear I did at Ardgillan. I was as happy there as the birds that fly in the clear sky above the sea, and much happier, for I had your companionship in addition to the delight which mere existence is in such scenes. I am glad Lily made and wore the wreath of lilac blossoms; I was sure it would become her. Give her my love and thanks for having done as I asked her. Oh, do not wish Ardgillan fifteen miles from London! Even for the sake of seeing you, I would not bring you near the smoke and dirt and comparative confinement of such a situation; I would not take you from your sea and sky and trees, even to have you within reach of me.

Certainly it is the natural evil of the human mind, and not the supernatural agency in the story of its development, that makes Macbeth so terrible; it is the hideousness of a wicked soul, into which enter more foul ingredients than are held in the witches' caldron of abominations, that makes the play so tremendous. I wish we had read that great work together. How it contrasts with what we did read, the "Tempest," that brightest creation of a wholesome genius in its hour of happiest inspiration!

I believe some people think it presumptuous to pray for any one but themselves; but it seems to me strange to share every feeling with those we love and not associate them with our best and holiest aspira-

tions; to remember them everywhere but there where it is of the utmost importance to us all to be remembered; to desire all happiness for them, and not to implore in their behalf the Giver of all good. I think I pray even more fervently for those I love than for myself. Pray for me, my dear H——, and God bless you and give you strength and peace. Your affectionate F. A. K.

I have not seen the railroad yet; if you do not write soon to me, we shall be gone to Manchester.

My objection to the dramatic profession on the score of its uselessness, in this letter, reminds me of what my mother used to tell me of Miss Brunton, who afterwards became Lady Craven; a very eccentric as well as attractive and charming woman, who contrived, too, to be a very charming actress, in spite of a prosaical dislike to her business, which used to take the peculiar and rather alarming turn of suddenly, in the midst of a scene, saying aside to her fellow-actors, "What nonsense all this is! Suppose we don't go on with it." This singular expostulation my mother said she always expected to see followed up by the sudden exit of her lively companion, in the middle of her part. Miss Brunton, however, had self-command enough to go on acting till she became Countess of Craven, and left off the *nonsense* of the stage for the *earnestness* of high life.

A very serious cause for depression had added itself to the weariness of spirit with which my distaste for my profession often affected me. While at Liverpool, I received a letter from my brother John which filled

me with surprise and vexation. After his return from Germany he had expressed his determination to go into the Church; and we all supposed him to be in the country, zealously engaged in the necessary preparatory studies. Infinite, therefore, was my astonishment to receive from him a letter dated from Algeciras, in Spain, telling me that he and several of his college companions, Sterling, Barton, Trench, and Boyd among others, had determined to lend the aid of their enthusiastic sympathy to the cause of liberty in Spain. The "cause of liberty in Spain" was then represented by the rash and ill-fated rising of General Torrijos against the Spanish Government, that protean nightmare which, in one form or another of bigotry and oppression, has ridden that unfortunate country up to a very recent time, when civil war has again interfered with apparently little prospect of any better result. My distress at receiving such unexpected news from my brother was aggravated by his forbidding me to write to him or speak of his plans and proceedings to any one. This concealment, which would have been both difficult and repugnant to me, was rendered impossible by the circumstances under which his letter reached me, and we all bore together, as well as we could, this severe disappointment and the cruel anxiety of receiving no further intelligence from John for a considerable time. I was bitterly grieved by this letter, which clearly indicated that the sacred profession for which my brother had begun to prepare himself, and in which we had hoped to see him erelong honourably and usefully labouring, was as little likely to be steadily pursued by him as the

legal career which he had renounced for it. Richard Trench brought home a knowledge of the Spanish tongue which has given to his own some beautiful translations of Calderon's masterpieces; and his early crusade for the enfranchisement of Spain has not militated against the well-deserved distinction he has achieved in the high calling to which he devoted himself. With my brother, however, the case was different. This romantic expedition cancelled all his purposes and prospects of entering the Church, and Alfred Tennyson's fine sonnet, addressed to him when he first determined to dedicate himself to the service of the temple, is all that bears witness to that short-lived consecration: it was poetry, but not prophecy.

Manchester, September 3, 1830.

My dearest H——,

I received your letter and the pretty Balbriggan stockings, for which I thank you very much, quite safely. I have not been able to put pen to paper till now, and even now do not know whether I can do more than just tell you that we have heard nothing further whatever from my brother. In his letter to me he said that he would write home whenever he could do so safely, but that no letter of ours would reach him; and, indeed, I do not now know where he may be. From the first moment of hearing this intelligence, which has amazed us all so much, I have felt less miserable than I could have thought possible under the circumstances; my mind, I think, has hardly taken hold of the truth of what has come so unexpectedly upon me. The very impossibility

of relieving one's suspense, I suppose, compels one not to give way to its worst suggestions, which may, after all, be unfounded. I cannot communicate with him, and must wait patiently till he can write again; he is in God's hand, and I hope and pray that he may be guided and protected. My great anxiety is to keep all knowledge of his having even gone abroad, if possible, from my mother. She is not in a state to bear such a shock, and I fear that the impossibility of ascertaining anything about him at present, which helps *me* to remain tolerably collected, would almost drive her distracted.

The news of the revolt in the Netherlands, together with the fact that one of our dear ones is away from us in scenes of peril and disturbance, has, I think, shaken my father's purpose of sending Henry to Heidelberg. It is a bad thing to leave a boy of eighteen so far from home control and influences; and he is of a sweet, affectionate, gentle disposition, that makes him liable to be easily led and persuaded by the examples and counsels of others. Moreover, he is at the age when boys are always in some love-scrape or other, and if he is left alone at Heidelberg, in his own unassisted weakness, at such a distance from us all, I should not be surprised to hear that he had constituted himself the lord and master of some blue-eyed *fräulein* with whom he could not exchange a dozen words in her own vernacular, and had become a *dis*-respectable *pater familias* at nineteen. In the midst of all the worry and anxiety which these considerations occasion, we are living here a most unsettled, flurried life of divided work and pleasure.

We have gone out to Heaton every morning after rehearsal, and come in with the W——s in the evening, to act. I think to-night we shall sleep there after the play, and come in with the W——s after dinner to-morrow. They had expected us to spend some days with them, and perhaps, after our Birmingham engagement, we may be able to do so. Heaton is a charming specimen of a fine country-house, and Lady W—— a charming specimen of a fine lady; she is handsome, stately, and gentle. I like Lord W——; he is clever, or rather accomplished, and refined. They are both of them very kind to me, and most pressing in their entreaties that we should return and stay as long as we can with them. To-morrow is my last night here; on Monday we act at Birmingham, and my father thinks we shall be able to avail ourselves of the invitation of our Liverpool friends, and witness the opening of the railroad. This would be a memorable pleasure, the opportunity of which should certainly not be neglected. I have been gratified and interested this morning and yesterday by going over one of the largest manufactories of this place, where I have seen a number of astonishing processes, from the fusing of iron in its roughest state to the construction of the most complicated machinery and the work that it performs. I have been examining and watching and admiring power-looms, and spinning-jennies, and every species of work accomplished by machinery. But what pleased me most of all was the process of casting iron. Did you know that the solid masses of iron-work which we see in powerful engines were many

of them cast in moulds of sand?—inconstant, shifting, restless sand! The strongest iron of all, though, gets its strength beaten into it.

Birmingham, September 7, 1830.

You see, my dearest H——, how my conversations are liable to be cut short in the midst; just at the point where I broke off, Lord and Lady W—— came to fetch us to Heaton, and until this moment, when I am quietly seated in Birmingham, I have not been able to resume the thread of my discourse. I once was told of a man who had been weather-bound at some port, whence he was starting for the West Indies; he was standing on the wharf, telling a long story to a friend, when a fair wind sprang up and he had to hurry on board. Two years after, returning thence, the first person he met on landing was his friend, whom he accosted with, "Oh, well, and so, as I was telling you," etc. But I cannot do that, for my mind has dwelt on new objects of interest since I began this letter, and my visit to Heaton has swept sand and iron and engines all back into the great warehouse at Manchester for a time, whence I may draw them at some future day for your edification.

Lady W—— possesses, to a great degree, beauty, that "tangible good" which you admire so much; she has a bright, serene countenance, and very sweet and noble eyes and forehead. Her manner is peculiarly winning and simple, and to me it was cordially kind, and even affectionate.

During the two days which were all we could spare for Heaton, I walked and rode and sang and talked,

and was so well amused and pleased that I hope, after our week's work is over here, we may return there for a short time. I must tell you of a curious little bit of *ancientry* which I saw at Heaton, which greatly delighted me—a "rush-bearing." At a certain period of the year, generally the beginning of autumn, it was formerly the wont in some parts of Lancashire to go round with sundry rustic mummeries to all the churches and strew them with rushes. The religious intention of the custom has passed away, but a pretty rural procession, which I witnessed, still keeps up the memory of it hereabouts. I was sitting at my window, looking out over the lawn, which slopes charmingly on every side down to the house, when the still summer air was suddenly filled with the sound of distant shouts and music, and presently the quaint pageant drew in sight. First came an immense waggon piled with rushes in a stack-like form, on the top of which sat two men holding two huge nosegays. This was drawn by a team of Lord W——'s finest farm-horses, all covered with scarlet cloths, and decked with ribbons and bells and flowers. After this came twelve country lads and lasses, dancing the real old morris-dance, with their handkerchiefs flying, and in all the rustic elegance of apparel which they could command for the occasion. After them followed a very good village band, and then a species of flowery canopy, under which walked a man and woman covered with finery, who, Lord W—— told me, represented Adam and Eve. The procession closed with a *fool* fantastically dressed out, and carrying the classical bladder at the end of his

stick. They drew up before the house and danced their morris-dance for us. The scraps of old poetry which came into my head, the contrast between this pretty picture of a bygone time and the modern but by no means unpicturesque group assembled under the portico, filled my mind with the pleasantest ideas, and I was quite sorry when the rural pageant wound up the woody heights again, and the last shout and peal of music came back across the sunny lawn. I am very glad I saw it. I have visited, too, Hopwood Hall, an enchanting old house in the neighbourhood of Heaton, some parts of which are as old as the reign of Edward the First. The gloomy but comfortable oak rooms, the beautiful and curious carving of which might afford one days of entertaining study, the low, latticed windows, and intricate, winding, up-and-down passages, contrasted and combined with all the elegant adornments of modern luxury, and the pretty country in which the house is situated, all delighted me. I must leave off writing to you now; I have to dress, and dine at three, which I am sorry for. Thank you for Mrs. Hemans's beautiful lines, which made me cry very heartily. I have not been altogether well for the last few days, and am feeling tired and out of spirits; if I can get a few days' quiet enjoyment of the country at Heaton, I shall feel fitter for my winter work than I do now.

Manchester, September 20, 1830.

My dearest H——,

I did not answer your letter which I received at Heaton, because the latter part of my stay there was

much engrossed by walking, riding, playing battledore and shuttlecock, singing, and being exceedingly busy all day long about nothing. I have just left it for this place, where we stop to-night on our way to Stafford; Heaton was looking lovely in all the beauty of its autumnal foliage, lighted by bright autumnal skies, and I am rather glad I did not answer you before, as it is a consolatory occupation to do so now.

I am going with my mother to stay a day at Stafford with my godmother, an old and attached friend of hers, after which we proceed into Buckinghamshire to join my aunt Dall and Henry and my sister, who are staying there; and we shall all return to London together for the opening of the theatre, which I think will take place on the first of next month. I could have wished to be going immediately to my work; I should have preferred screwing my courage to my professional tasks at once, instead of loitering by way of pleasure on the road. Besides that, in my visit to Buckinghamshire I come in contact with persons whose society is not very agreeable to me. My mother, however, made a great sacrifice in giving up her fishing, which she was enjoying very much, to come and chaperon me at Heaton, where there is no fishing so good as at Aston Clinton, so that I am bound to submit cheerfully to her wishes in the present instance.

You probably have by this time heard and read accounts of the opening of the railroad, and the fearful accident which occurred at it, for the papers are full of nothing else. The accident you mention *did* occur, but though the unfortunate man who was

killed bore Mr. Stephenson's name, he was not related to him. I will tell you something of the events on the 15th, as, though you may be acquainted with the circumstances of poor Mr. Huskisson's death, none but an eye-witness of the whole scene can form a conception of it. I told you that we had had places given to us, and it was the main purpose of our returning from Birmingham to Manchester to be present at what promised to be one of the most striking events in the scientific annals of our country. We started on Wednesday last, to the number of about eight hundred people, in carriages constructed as I before described to you. The most intense curiosity and excitement prevailed, and, though the weather was uncertain, enormous masses of densely packed people lined the road, shouting and waving hats and handkerchiefs as we flew by them. What with the sight and sound of these cheering multitudes and the tremendous velocity with which we were borne past them, my spirits rose to the true champagne height, and I never enjoyed anything so much as the first hour of our progress. I had been unluckily separated from my mother in the first distribution of places, but by an exchange of seats which she was enabled to make she rejoined me when I was at the height of my ecstasy, which was considerably damped by finding that she was frightened to death, and intent upon nothing but devising means of escaping from a situation which appeared to her to threaten with instant annihilation herself and all her travelling companions. While I was chewing the cud of this disappointment, which was rather bitter, as I had

expected her to be as delighted as myself with our excursion, a man flew by us, calling out through a speaking-trumpet to stop the engine, for that somebody in the directors' carriage had sustained an injury. We were all stopped accordingly, and presently a hundred voices were heard exclaiming that Mr. Huskisson was killed; the confusion that ensued is indescribable: the calling out from carriage to carriage to ascertain the truth, the contrary reports which were sent back to us, the hundred questions eagerly uttered at once, and the repeated and urgent demands for surgical assistance, created a sudden turmoil that was quite sickening. At last we distinctly ascertained that the unfortunate man's thigh was broken. From Lady W——, who was in the duke's carriage, and within three yards of the spot where the accident happened, I had the following details, the horror of witnessing which we were spared through our situation behind the great carriage. The engine had stopped to take in a supply of water, and several of the gentlemen in the directors' carriage had jumped out to look about them. Lord W——, Count Batthyany, Count Matuscenitz, and Mr. Huskisson among the rest were standing talking in the middle of the road, when an engine on the other line, which was parading up and down merely to show its speed, was seen coming down upon them like lightning. The most active of those in peril sprang back into their seats: Lord W—— saved his life only by rushing behind the duke's carriage, and Count Matuscenitz had but just leaped into it, with the engine all but touching his heels as he did so; while

poor Mr. Huskisson, less active from the effects of age and ill health, bewildered, too, by the frantic cries of "Stop the engine! Clear the track!" that resounded on all sides, completely lost his head, looked helplessly to the right and left, and was instantaneously prostrated by the fatal machine, which dashed down like a thunderbolt upon him, and passed over his leg, smashing and mangling it in the most horrible way. (Lady W—— said she distinctly heard the crushing of the bone.) So terrible was the effect of the appalling accident that, except that ghastly "crushing" and poor Mrs. Huskisson's piercing shriek, not a sound was heard or a word uttered among the immediate spectators of the catastrophe. Lord W—— was the first to raise the poor sufferer, and calling to aid his surgical skill, which is considerable, he tied up the severed artery, and for a time, at least, prevented death by loss of blood. Mr. Huskisson was then placed in a carriage with his wife and Lord W——, and the engine, having been detached from the director's carriage, conveyed them to Manchester. So great was the shock produced upon the whole party by this event, that the Duke of Wellington declared his intention not to proceed, but to return immediately to Liverpool. However, upon its being represented to him that the whole population of Manchester had turned out to witness the procession, and that a disappointment might give rise to riots and disturbances, he consented to go on, and gloomily enough the rest of the journey was accomplished. We had intended returning to Liverpool by the railroad, but Lady W——, who seized upon me in the

midst of the crowd, persuaded us to accompany her home, which we gladly did. Lord W—— did not return till past ten o'clock, at which hour he brought the intelligence of Mr. Huskisson's death. I need not tell you of the sort of whispering awe which this event threw over our whole circle, and yet, great as was the horror excited by it, I could not help feeling how evanescent the effect of it was after all. The shuddering terror of seeing our fellow-creature thus struck down by our side, and the breathless thankfulness for our own preservation, rendered the first evening of our party at Heaton almost solemn; but the next day the occurrence became a subject of earnest, it is true, but free discussion; and after that, was alluded to with almost as little apparent feeling as if it had not passed under our eyes, and within the space of a few hours.

I have heard nothing of my brother; my mother distresses me by talking of him, ignorant as she is of what would give her so much more anxiety about him. I feel, while I listen to her, almost guilty of deceit; and yet I am sure we were right in doing for her what soe cannot do for herself, keeping her mind as long as possible in comparative tranquility about him.

Our Sunday at Heaton terminated with much solemn propriety by Lord W—— reading aloud the evening prayers to the whole family, visitors, and servants assembled; a ceremony which, combined and contrasted with so much of the pomps and vanities of the world, gave me a pleasant feeling towards these people, who live in the midst of them without for-

getting better things. I mean to make studying German and drawing (and endeavouring to abate my self-esteem) my principal occupations this winter. I have met at Heaton Lord Francis Leveson Gower, the translator of "Faust." I like him very much; he is a young man of a great deal of talent, with a charming, gentle manner, and a very handsome, sweet face. Good-bye, dear H——. Write to me soon, and direct to No. 79, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury. I should like to find a letter from you there, waiting for me.

Our arrangement for driving in to the theatre from Heaton compelled me once or twice to sit down to dinner in my theatrical costume, a device for saving time in dressing at the theatre which might have taxed my self-possession unpleasantly; but the persons I was surrounded by were all singularly kind and amiable to me, and my appearing among them in these picturesque fancy-dresses was rather a source of amusement to us all. Many years after, a lady who was not staying in the house, but was invited from the neighbourhood to dine at Heaton one evening, told me how amazed she had been on the sudden wide opening of the drawing-room doors to see me enter, in full mediæval costume of black satin and velvet, cut Titian fashion, and with a long, sweeping train, for which apparition she had not been previously prepared. Of Lord W—— I have already spoken, and have only to add that, in spite of his character of a mere dissipated man of fashion, he had an unusual taste for and knowledge of music, and had composed

some that is not destitute of merit; he played well on the organ, and delighted in that noble instrument, a fine specimen of which adorned one of the drawing-rooms at Heaton. Moreover, he possessed an accomplishment of a very different order, a remarkable proficiency in anatomy, which he had studied very thoroughly. He had made himself enough of a practical surgeon to be able, on the occasion of the fatal accident which befell Mr. Huskisson on the day of the opening of the railroad, to save the unfortunate gentleman from bleeding to death on the spot, by tying up the femoral artery, which had been severed. His fine riding in the hunting-field and on the race-course was a less peculiar talent among his special associates. Lady W—— was strikingly handsome in person, and extremely attractive in her manners. She was tall and graceful, the upper part of her face, eyes, brow, and forehead were radiant and sweet, and, though the rest of her features were not regularly beautiful, her countenance was noble and her smile had a peculiar charm of expression at once winning and mischievous. My father said she was very like her fascinating mother, the celebrated Miss Farren. She was extremely kind to me, petting me almost like a spoiled child, dressing me in her own exquisite riding-habit and mounting me on her own favourite horse, which was all very delightful to me. My father and mother probably thought the acquaintance of these distinguished members of the highest English society advantageous to me. I have no doubt they felt both pride and pleasure in the notice bestowed upon me by persons so much my superiors in rank,

and had a natural sympathy in my enjoyment of all the gay grandeur and kindly indulgence by which I was surrounded at Heaton. I now take the freedom to doubt how far they were judicious in allowing me to be so taken out of my own proper social sphere. It encouraged my taste for the luxurious refinement and elegant magnificence of a mode of life never likely to be mine, and undoubtedly increased my distaste for the coarse and common details of my professional duties behind the scenes, and the sham splendours of the stage. The guests at Heaton of whom I have a distinct remembrance were Mr. and Lady Harriet Baring, afterwards Lord and Lady Ashburton. I knew them both in after-life, and liked them very much; Mr. Baring was highly cultivated and extremely amiable; his wife was much cleverer than he, and in many respects a remarkable woman. The beautiful sisters, Anne and Isabella Forrester, with their brother Cecil, were at Heaton at this time. They were celebrated beauties: the elder, afterwards Countess of Chesterfield, was a brunette; the younger, who married Colonel Anson, the most renowned lady-killer of his day, was a blonde; and they were both of them exquisitely pretty, and used to remind me of the French quatrain—

> "Vous êtes belle, et votre sœur est belle;
> Entre vous deux, tout choix serait bien doux.
> L'Amour était blond, comme vous,
> Mais il aimait une brune, comme elle."

They had beautiful figures as well as faces, and dressed peculiarly and so as to display them to the greatest advantage. Long and very full skirts

gathered or plaited all round a pointed waist were then the fashion; these lovely ladies, with a righteous scorn of all disfigurement of their beauty, wore extremely short skirts, which showed their thoroughbred feet and ankles, and were perfectly plain round their waists and over their hips, with bodies so low on the shoulders and bosom that there was certainly as little as possible of their beautiful persons concealed. I remember wishing it were consistent with her comfort and the general decorum of modern manners that Isabella Forrester's gown could only slip entirely off her exquisite bust. I suppose I felt as poor Gibson, the sculptor, who, looking at his friend and pupil's (Miss Hosmer's) statue of Beatrice Cenci, the back of which was copied from that of Lady A—— T——, exclaimed in his slow, measured, deliberate manner, "And to think that the cursed prejudices of society prevent my seeing that beautiful back!" Count and Countess Batthyany (she the former widow of the celebrated Austrian general, Bubna, a most distinguished and charming woman) were visitors at Heaton at this time, as was also Henry Greville, with whom I then first became acquainted, and who from that time until his death was my kind and constant friend. He was for several years attached to the embassy in Paris, and afterwards had some small nominal post in the household of the Duchess of Cambridge, and was Gentleman Gold-Stick in waiting at court. He was not in any way intellectually remarkable; he had a passion for music, and was one of the best society singers of his day, being (that, to me, incomprehensible thing) a *mélo-*

mane for one kind of music only. Passionately fond of Italian operatic music, he did not understand, and therefore cordially detested, German music. He had a passion for the stage; but though he delighted in acting he did not particularly excel in it. He had a taste for everything elegant and refined, and his small house in May-Fair was a perfect casket full of gems. He was a natural exquisite, and perfectly simple and unaffected, a great authority in all matters of fashion both in Paris and in London, and a universal favourite, especially with the women, in the highest society of both capitals. His social position, friendly intimacy with several of the most celebrated musical and dramatic artists of his day, passion for political and private gossip, easy and pleasant style of letter-writing, and general rather supercilious fastidiousness, used sometimes to remind me of Horace Walpole. He had a singularly kind heart and amiable nature, for a life of mere frivolous pleasure had not impaired the one or the other. His serviceableness to his friends was unwearied, and his generous liberality towards all whom he could help either with his interest, his trouble, or his purse was unfailing.

The whole gay party assembled at Heaton, my mother and myself included, went to Liverpool for the opening of the railroad. The throng of strangers gathered there for the same purpose made it almost impossible to obtain a night's lodging for love or money; and glad and thankful were we to put up with and be put up in a tiny garret by our old friend, Mr. Radley, of the Adelphi, which many would have

given twice what we paid to obtain. The day opened gloriously, and never was seen an innumerable concourse of sight-seers in better humour than the surging, swaying crowd that lined the railroad with living faces. How dreadfully that brilliant opening was overcast I have described in the letter given above. After this disastrous event the day became overcast, and as we neared Manchester the sky grew cloudy and dark, and it began to rain. The vast concourse of people who had assembled to witness the triumphant arrival of the successful travellers was of the lowest order of mechanics and artisans, among whom great distress and a dangerous spirit of discontent with the Government at that time prevailed. Groans and hisses greeted the carriage, full of influential personages, in which the Duke of Wellington sat. High above the grim and grimy crowd of scowling faces a loom had been erected, at which sat a tattered, starved-looking weaver, evidently set there as a *representative man*, to protest against this triumph of machinery, and the gain and glory which the wealthy Liverpool and Manchester men were likely to derive from it. The contrast between our departure from Liverpool and our arrival at Manchester was one of the most striking things I ever witnessed. The news of Mr. Huskisson's fatal accident spread immediately, and his death, which did not occur till the evening, was anticipated by rumour. A terrible cloud covered this great national achievement, and its success, which in every respect was complete, was atoned for to the Nemesis of good fortune by the sacrifice of the first financial statesman of the country.

CHAPTER VII.

Great Russell Street, Friday, October 1, 1830.

DEAREST H——,

I have risen very early, for what with excitement, and the wakefulness always attendant with me upon a new bed, I have slept but little, and I snatch this first hour of the day, the only one I may be able to command, to tell you that I have heard from my brother, and that he is safe and well, for which, thank God! Further I know nothing. He talks vaguely of being with us towards the end of the winter, but in the mean time, unless he finds some means of conveying some tidings of his welfare to me, I must remain in utter ignorance of his circumstances and situation. Your letter, which was to welcome me to my new home, arrived there two days before I did, and was forwarded to me into Buckinghamshire. A few days there,—taking what interest I could in the sporting and fishing, the country quiet of the place, and above all the privilege of taking the sacrament, which, had I remained at Heaton, I should have had no opportunity of doing,—gave me a breathing-time and a sense of mental repose before entering again upon that busy life whose demands are already besieging me in the

inexorable form of half a dozen new stage dresses to be devised, ordered, and executed in the shortest imaginable time.

October 3rd.

You see how truly I prophesied at the beginning of this letter, when I said that the hour before breakfast was perhaps the only one I should be able to command that day. I might have said that week, for this is the first instant I have been able to call my own since then. I rehearsed Juliet yesterday, and shall do so again to-morrow morning; the theatre opens with it to-morrow night. I have a new nurse, and I am rehearsing for her, poor woman! She is dreadfully alarmed at taking Mrs. Davenport's place, who certainly was a very great favourite. I am half crazy with the number of new dresses to be got; for though, thanks to the kindness and activity of my mother, none of the trouble of devising them ever falls on me, yet the bare catalogue of silks and satins and velvets, hats and feathers and ruffs, fills me with amazement and trepidation. I fancy I shall go through all the old parts, and then come out in a new tragedy. I shall be most horribly frightened, but I hope I shall do well, for the sake of the poor author, who is a young man of great abilities, and to whom I wish every success. The subject of his play is taken from a Spanish one, called "The Jew of Aragon," and the whole piece is of a new and unhackneyed order. My father and I play a Jewish father and daughter; this and the novelty of the story itself will perhaps be favourable to the play; I hope so with all my heart.

Mrs. Henry Siddons has taken a house in London

for six months; I have not seen her yet, but am most anxious to do so. Anxiety and annoyance, I fear, have just caused her a severe indisposition, but she is a little better now. Mrs. Siddons is much better. She is staying at Leamington at present.

Dearest H——, returning from Buckinghamshire the other day, I passed Cassiobury, the grove, the little lane leading down to Heath Farm, and Miss M——'s cottage, and the first days of our acquaintance came back to my memory. I suppose I should have liked and loved you wherever I had met you, but you come in for a share of my love and liking of Cassiobury, and the spring, the beautiful season in which we met first. I send you the long-promised lock of my hair; you will be surprised at the lightness of the shade—at least, I was. It was cut from my forehead, and I think it is a nice bit; tell me that you get it safe.

Henry is staying in Buckinghamshire in all the ecstasy of a young cockney's first sporting days. When he was quite a child and was asked what profession he intended to embrace, he replied that he would be "*a gentleman and wear leather breeches*," and I think it is the very destiny he is fitted to fill. He is the perfect picture of happiness when in his shooting-jacket and gaiters, with his gun on his shoulder and a bright day before him; and although we were obliged to return to town, my mother was unwilling to curtail his pleasure, and left him to murder pheasants and hares, and amuse himself in a manly fashion.

I did not like the place at which they were staying as much as they did, for though the country was very pretty, I had during the summer tour seen so much

that surpassed it that I saw it at a disadvantage. Then, I have no fancy for gipsying, and the greatest taste for all the formal proprieties of life, and what I should call "silver fork existence" in general; and the inconveniences of a small country inn, without really affecting my comfort, disturb my decided preference for luxury. The principal diversion my ingenious mind discovered to while away my time with was a *fiddle* (an elderly one), which I routed out of a lumber closet, and from which, after due invocations to St. Cecilia, I drew such diabolical sounds as I flatter myself were never excelled by Tartini or his master, the devil himself. I must now close this, for it is tea-time.

The play of "The Jew of Aragon," the first dramatic composition of a young gentleman of the name of Wade, of whose talent my father had a very high opinion, which he trusted the success of his piece would confirm, I am sorry to say failed entirely. It was the first time and the last that I had the distress of assisting in damning a piece, and what with my usual intense nervousness in acting a new part, my anxiety for the interests of both the author and the theatre, and the sort of indignant terror with which, instead of the applause I was accustomed to, I heard the hisses which testified the distaste and disapprobation of the public and the failure of the play, I was perfectly miserable when the curtain fell, and the poor young author, as pale as a ghost, came forward to meet my father at the side scene, and bravely holding out his hand to him said, "Never mind for

me, Mr. Kemble; I'll do better another time." And so indeed he did; for he wrote a charming play on the old pathetic story of "Griselda," in which that graceful actress Miss Jarman played his heroine, and my father the hero, and which had an entire and well-deserved success. I am obliged to confess that I retain no recollection whatever of the ill-fated play of "The Jew of Aragon," or my own part in it, save the last *scene* alone; this, I recollect, was a magnificent Jewish place of worship, in which my father, who was the high priest, appeared in vestments such as I believe the Jewish priests still wear in their solemn ceremonies, and which were so closely copied from the description of Aaron's sacred pontifical robes that I felt a sense of impropriety in such a representation (purely historical, as it was probably considered, and in no way differing from the costume accepted on the French stage in Racine's Jewish plays). And I think it extremely likely that the failure of the piece, which had been imminent all through, found its climax in the unfavourable impression made upon the audience by this very scene, in spite of my father's noble and picturesque appearance.

I never heard hisses on the stage before or since; and though I was very well aware that on this occasion they were addressed neither to me nor to my performance, I think if they had been the whistling of bullets (which I have also heard nearer than was pleasant) I could not have felt more frightened and furious.

Young Wade's self-control and composure during the catastrophe of this play reminds me, by contrast, of a most ludicrous story my father used to tell of

some unfortunate authoress, who, in an evil hour for herself and some friendly provincial manager, persuaded him to bring out an original drama of hers.

The audience (not a very discriminating or numerous one) were sufficiently appreciative to object extremely to the play, and large enough to make their objections noisily apparent.

The manager, in his own distress not unmindful of his poor friend, the authoress, sought her out to console her, and found her seated at the side scene with a glass of stiff brandy and water that some commiserating friend had administered to her for her support, rocking herself piteously to and fro, and, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, uttering between sobs and sips, in utter self-abasement, her *peccavi* in the form of oaths and imprecations of the finest Billingsgate vernacular (all, however, addressed to herself), that would have made a dragoon shake in his shoes. The original form of which *mea culpa* seized the worthy manager with such an irresistibly ludicrous effect that he left the poor, guilty authoress without being able to address a syllable to her, lest he should explode in peals of laughter instead of decent words of condolence.

To accompany an author or authoress (I should think especially the latter) on the first night of the representation of their piece is by no means a pleasant act of duty or friendship. I remember my mother, whose own nervous temperament certainly was extremely ill adapted for such an undertaking, describing the intolerable distress she had experienced on the occasion of the first representation of a piece called, I

think, "Father and Son," taken from a collection of interesting stories entitled "The Canterbury Tales," and adapted to the stage by one of the Misses Lee, the sister authoresses of the Tales. The piece was very fairly successful, but my mother said that though, according to her very considerable experience, the actors were by no means more imperfect in their parts than usual on a first night, her nervous anxiety was kept almost at fever height by poor Miss Lee's incessant running commentary of "Ah! very pretty, no doubt —very fine, I dare say—*only I never wrote a word of it!*"

Lord Byron took the same story for the subject of his powerful play of "Werner," in which Mr. Macready acted so finely, and with such great success.

I cannot imagine what possessed me in an unguarded hour to consent, as I did, to go with my friends, Messrs. Tom Taylor and Charles Reade, to see the first representation of a play of theirs called, I think, "The King's Wager," in which Charles the Second, Nell Gwynn, and the Plague were prominent characters. Accidental circumstances prevented one of the gentlemen from coming with me, and I have often since wondered at my temerity in having placed myself in such a trying situation.

Great Russell Street, October 24, 1830.

DEAR H——,

I have been too busy to answer your last sooner, but this hour before bedtime, the first quiet one for some time, shall be yours. I have heard nothing more of my brother, and am ignorant where

he is or how engaged at present. You judged rightly with respect to the impossibility of longer keeping my mother in ignorance of his absence from England. The result was pretty much what I had apprehended; but her feelings have now become somewhat calmer on the subject. We are careful, however, as much as possible, to avoid all mention of or reference to my brother in her presence, for she is in a very cruel state of anxiety about him.

I am endeavouring as much as possible to follow my studies with some regularity. I have forsworn paying and receiving morning visits; so that, when no rehearsal interferes, I get my practicing, my singing, and my reading in tolerable peace.

I have had a key of Russell Square offered me, which privilege I shall most thankfully accept. Walking regularly is, of course, essential, and though I rather dread the idea of solitarily turning round and round that dreary emblem of eternity, a circular gravel walk, over-*gloomed* with soot-blackened privet bushes, I am sure I ought, and I mean to do it every day for an hour. We do not dine till six, when I do not act, and when I do, I do not go to the theatre till that hour; so that from ten in the morning, when breakfast is over, I get a tolerably long day. I have obtained my father's leave to learn drawing and German, and as soon as our house is a little more comfortably settled, I shall begin both. I do not know whether I have the least talent for drawing, but I have so strong a desire to possess that accomplishment that I think, by the help of a good master and patience and hard work, I must succeed to some

decent degree. I wish to provide myself with every possible resource against the engrossing excitement of my profession while I remain in it, and to fill its place whenever I leave it, or it leaves me; all my occupations are with that view and to that end.

My father has promised me to speak to Mr. Murray about publishing my play and my verses. I am anxious for this for several reasons, some of which I believe I mentioned to you; and to these I have since added a great wish to have some good prints I possess framed, for my little room, and I should not scruple to apply part of the money so earned to that purpose. You asked me which is my room. You remember the bath-room, next to what was my uncle John's bed-room, on the third floor; the room above that my mother has fitted up beautifully for me, and I inhabit it all day long with great complacency and a sort of comfortable, Alexander-Selkirk feeling. And this suggests a question which has seldom been out of my mind, and which I wish to recall to yours. When do you intend to come and see me? I can offer you a nest on the *fourth story*, which is excellent for your health, as free a circulation of air as a London lodging can well afford, and as fine a combination of chimney-pots as even your love of the picturesque could desire.

Dear H——, will you not come and pass a month with us? Now stop a bit, and I will point out to you one by one the inducements to and advantages of such a step. In the first place, my father and mother both request and wish it, and you know how truly happy it would make me. Your own people can well

spare you for a month, and I am sure will be the more inclined to do so from the consideration that change of air and scene will be good for you, and that, though your stock of original ideas is certainly extraordinary, yet you cannot be expected to go on for ever, like a spider, existing mentally in the midst of your own weavings, without every now and then recruiting your strength and taking in a new supply of material.

You shall come to London, that huge mass of matter for thought and observation, and to me, in whom you find so interesting an epitome of all the moods, tenses, and conjugations of every regular and irregular form of "to do, to be, and to suffer;" and when you have been sufficiently *smoked*, *fogged*, astonished, and edified, you shall return home with one infallible result of your stay with us—increased value for a peaceful life, quiet companions, a wide sea-view, and potatoes roasted in their skins; not but what you shall have the last-mentioned luxury here, if you will but come.

Now, dear H——, I wish this very much, but promise to bear your answer reasonably well; I depend upon your indulging me if you can, and shall try not to behave ill if you don't; so do me justice, and do not give way to your shyness and habits of retirement. I want you to come here before the 20th of November, and then I will let you go in time to be at home for Christmas. So now my cause is in your hands—*avisez-vous*.

I wonder whether you have heard that my father has been thrashing the editor of the *Age* newspaper,

who, it seems, took offence at my father's not appearing on sufficiently familiar terms with him somewhere or other when they met, in revenge for which "coldness" (as he styles it) he has not ceased for the last six months abusing us, every week, in his paper. From what I hear I was the especial mark of his malice; of course I need not tell you that, knowing the character of this publication, I should never have looked at it, and the circumstance of my name appearing in its columns would hardly have been an inducement to me to do so. I knew nothing, therefore, of my own injuries, but heard general expressions of indignation against Mr. Westmacott, and saw that my father was extremely exasperated upon the subject. The other night they were all going to the play, and pressed me very much to go too, but I had something I wished to write, and remained at home. On their return my father appeared to me much excited, and I was informed that having unluckily come across Mr. Westmacott, his wrath had got the better of his self-command, and he had bestowed a severe beating upon that individual. I could not help looking very grave at this; for though I should have been very well satisfied if it could have *rained* a good thrashing upon Mr. Westmacott from the sky, yet, as I do not approve of returning injuries by injuries, I could not rejoice that my father had done so. I suppose he saw that I had no great satisfaction in the event, for he said, "The law affords no redress against such attacks as this paper makes on people, and I thought it time to take justice in my own hands when my daughter is insulted." He then

repeated some of the language made use of with reference to me in the *Age*, and I could not help blushing with indignation to my fingers' ends.

Perhaps, under the circumstances, it is not surprising that my father has done what he has, but I think I should have admired him more if he had not. Mr. Westmacott means to bring an action against him, and I am afraid he will have to pay dearly for his momentary indulgence of temper.

I must have done writing, though I had a good deal more to say. God bless you, dear. If you answer this letter directly, I will write you a better next time.

Ever yours,

F. A. K.

The majority of parents—mothers, I believe I ought to say—err in one or other excess with regard to their children. Love either blinds them absolutely to their defects, or makes them so terribly alive to them as to exaggerate every imperfection. It is hard to say which of the errors is most injurious in its effects. I suppose according as the temperament is desponding and diffident, or sanguine and self-sufficient, the one system or the other is likely to do most harm.

My mother's intensely nervous organization, acute perceptions, and exacting taste made her in everything most keenly alive to our faults and deficiencies. The unsparing severity of the sole reply or comment she ever vouchsafed to our stupidity, want of sense, or want of observation,—"I hate a fool,"—has remained almost like a cut with a lash across my memory.

Her wincing sensitiveness of ear made it all but impossible for me to practise either the piano or singing within hearing of her exclamations of impatient anguish at my false chords and flat intonations; and I suppose nothing but my sister's *unquenchable* musical genius would have sustained her naturally timid, sensitive disposition under such discipline.

Two of our family, my eldest brother and myself, were endowed with such robust self-esteem and elastic conceit as not only defied repression but, unfortunately for us, could never be effectually snubbed; with my sister and my younger brother the case was entirely different, and encouragement was rather what they required. How well it is for the best and wisest, as well as the least good and least wise, of trainers of youth, that God is above all. I do not myself understand the love that blinds one to the defects of those dear to one; their faults are part of themselves, without which they could not be themselves, no more to be denied or dissembled, it seems to me, than the colour of their eyes or hair. I do not feel the scruple which I observe in others, in alluding to the failings of those they love. The mingled good and evil qualities in my friends make up their individual identity, and neither from myself, nor from them, nor from others does it ever occur to me that half that identity should or could be concealed. I could as soon imagine them without their arms or their legs as without their peculiar moral characteristics, and could no more think of them without their faults than without their virtues.

Many were the pleasant hours, in spite of my

misgivings, that I passed with a book in my hand, mechanically pacing the gravel walks of Russell Square. Certain readings of Shakespeare's plays, "Othello" and "Macbeth" especially, in lonely absorption of spirit, I associate for ever with that place. I remember, too, reading at my father's request, during those peripatetic exercises, two plays written by Sheil for his amiable countrywoman, Miss O'Neill, in which she won deserved laurels: "Evadne, or the Statue," and "The Apostate." I never had the pleasure of seeing Miss O'Neill act; but the impression left on my mind by those plays was that her abilities must have been very great to have given them the effect and success they had. As for me, as usual, of course my reply to my father was a disconsolate "I am sure *I* can do nothing with them."

My friend H—— S——, in coming to us in Russell Street, came to a house that had been almost a home to her and her brother when they were children, in the life of my uncle and Mrs. John Kemble, by whom they were regarded with great affection, and whom they visited and stayed with as if they had been young relations of their own.

My hope of learning German and drawing was frustrated by the engrossing calls of my theatrical occupations. The first study was reserved for a long-subsequent season, when I had recourse to it as a temporary distraction in perplexity and sorrow, from which I endeavoured to find relief in some sustained intellectual effort; and I mastered it sufficiently to translate without difficulty Schiller's "Mary Stuart" and some of his minor poems.

As for drawing, that I have once or twice tried to accomplish, but the circumstances of my unsettled and restless life have been unfavourable for any steady effort to follow it up, and I have got no further yet than a passionate desire to know how to draw. If (as I sometimes imagine) in a future existence undeveloped capacities and persistent yearnings for all kinds of good may find expansion and exercise, and not only our moral but also our intellectual being put forth new powers and achieve progress in new directions, then in some of the successive heavens to which, perhaps, I may be allowed to climb (if to any) I shall be a painter of pictures; a mere idea that suggests a heavenly state of long-desired capacity, to possess which, here on earth, I would give at once the finger of either hand least indispensable to an artist. Of the two pursuits, a painter's or a musician's, considered not as arts but as accomplishments merely, the former appears to me infinitely more desirable, for a woman, than the latter far more frequently cultivated one. The one is a sedative, the other an acute stimulant to the nervous system. The one is a perfectly independent and always to be commanded occupation; the other imperatively demands an instrument, utters an audible challenge to attention, and must either command solitude or disturb any society not inclined to become an audience. The one cultivates habits of careful, accurate observation of nature, and requires patient and precise labour in reproducing her models; the other appeals powerfully to the imagination and emotions, and charms almost in proportion as it excites its votaries. With regard to natural aptitude,

the most musical of nations—the German—shows by the impartial training of its common schools how universal it considers a certain degree of musical capacity.

Our musical literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the glees, madrigals, rounds, and catches, requiring considerable skill, and familiarly performed formerly in the country houses and home circles of our gentry, and the noble church music of our cathedral choirs, bear witness to a high musical inspiration, and thorough musical training in their composers and executants.

We seem to have lost this vein of original national music; the Lancashire weavers and spinners are still good choristers, but among the German half of our common Teutonic race, the real feeling for and knowledge of music continues to flourish, while with the Anglo-Saxons of Britain and America it has dwindled and decayed.

Great Russell Street, November 8, 1830.

Dearest H——,

I received your note, for I cannot honour the contents of your last with the name of a letter (whatever title the shape and quantity of the paper it was written on may claim).

I have made up my mind to let you make up yours, without urging you further upon the subject; but I must reply to one thing. You say to me, could you bring with you a strip of sea-shore, a corner of blue sky, or half a dozen waves, you would not hesitate. Allow me to say that whereas by the sea-side or under

a bright sky your society enhances the pleasure derived from them, I now desire it (not having these) as delightful in itself, increasing my enjoyment in the beauties of nature, and compensating for their absence. But I have done; only if Mrs. K—— has held out a false hope to me, she is ferocious and atrocious, and that is all, and so pray tell her.

I had left myself so little room to tell you about this disagreeable business of the *Age* newspaper, in my last, that I thought what I said of it would be almost unintelligible to you. I do not really deserve the sympathy you express for my feelings in the matter, for partly from being totally ignorant of the nature and extent of my injuries—having never, of course, read a line of that scurrilous newspaper,—and partly from my indifference to everything that is said about me, I really have felt no annoyance or distress on the subject, beyond, as I told you, one moment's feminine indignation at a coarse expression which was repeated to me, but which in strict truth did not and could not apply to me; and considerable regret that my father should have touched Mr. Westmacott even with a stick, or a "pair of tongs." That individual intends bringing a suit for damages, which makes me very anxious to have my play and rhymes published, if I can get anything for them, as I think the profits derived from my "scribbles" (as good Queen Anne called her letters) would be better bestowed in paying for that little ebullition of my father's temper than in decorating my tiny sanctum. What does my poor, dear father expect, but that I shall be bespattered if I am to live on the highway?

Mr. Murray has been kind enough to say he will publish my very original compositions, and I am preparing them for him. I am sorry to say I have heard nothing from my brother; *of* him I have heard, for his whereabout is known and talked of—so much so, indeed, that my father says further concealment is at once useless and ridiculous. I may therefore now tell you that he is at this moment in Spain, trying to levy troops for the cause of the constitutionalists. I need not tell you, dearest H——, how much I regret this, because you will know how deeply I must disapprove of it. I might have thought any young man Quixotic who thus mistook a restless, turbulent spirit, eager to embrace a quarrel not his own, for patriotism and self-devotion to a sacred cause; but in my brother, who had professed aims and purposes so opposed to tumult and war and bloodshed, it seems to me a subject of much more serious regret. Heaven only knows what plans he has formed for the future! His present situation affords anxiety enough to warrant our not looking further in anticipation of vexation, but even if the present be regarded with the best hope of success in his undertaking, the natural consideration must be, as far as he is concerned, "What follows?" It is rather a melancholy consideration that such abilities should be wasted and misapplied. Our own country is in a perilous state of excitement, and these troubled times make politicians of us all. Of course the papers will have informed you of the risings in Kent and Sussex; London itself is in an unquiet state that suggests the heaving of a volcano before an eruption. It is said that the Duke of

Wellington must resign; I am ignorant, but it appears to me that whenever he does it will be a bad day's work for England. The alarm and anxiety of the aristocracy is extreme, and exhibits itself, even as I have had opportunity of observing in society, in the half-angry, half-frightened tone of their comments on public events. If one did not sympathize with their apprehensions, their mode of expressing them would sometimes be amusing.

The aspect of public affairs is injurious to the theatre, and these graver interests thin our houses while they crowd the houses of Parliament. However, when we played "The Provoked Husband" before the king and queen the other night, the theatre was crammed from floor to ceiling, and presented a most beautiful *coup d'œil*. I have just come out in Mrs. Haller. It seems to have pleased the people very much. I need not tell you how much I dislike the play; it is the quintessence of trashy sentimentalism; but our audiences cry and sob at it till we can hardly hear ourselves speak on the stage, and the public in general rejoices in what the servant-maids call "something deep." My father acts the Stranger with me, which makes it very trying to my nerves, as I mix up all my own personal feelings for him with my acting, and the sight of his anguish and sense of his displeasure is really very dreadful to me, though it is only all about "stuff and nonsense" after all.

I must leave off writing; I am excruciated with the toothache, which has tormented me without respite all day. I will inclose a line to Mrs. K——, which I will beg you to convey to her.

With kindest love to all your circle, believe me ever yours,

F. A. K.

Thank you for your delicious French comic song; you should come to London to hear how admirably I sing it.

Mrs. K—— was a Miss Dawson, sister of the Right Honourable George Dawson, and the wife of an eminent member of the Irish bar. She was a woman of great mental cultivation and unusual information upon subjects which are generally little interesting to women. She was a passionate partisan of Owen the philanthropist and Combe the phrenologist, and entertained the most sanguine hopes of the regeneration of the whole civilized world through the means of the theories of these benevolent reformers. Except Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, I do not think a woman can have existed who combined the love of things futile and serious to the same degree as Mrs. K——. Her feminine taste for fashionable society and the frivolities of dress, together with her sober and solid studies of the gravest sort and her devotion to the speculations of her friends Owen and Combe, constituted a rare union of contrasts. She was a remarkable instance of the combination exemplified by more than one eminent person of her sex, of a capacity for serious study, solid acquirements, and enlightened and liberal views upon the most important subjects, with a decided inclination for those more trifling pursuits supposed to be the paramount interests of the female mind. She was the dear

friend of my dear friend Miss S——, and corresponded with her upon the great subject of social progress with a perfect enthusiasm of theoretical reform.

Great Russell Street, November 14th.

DEAREST H——,

Thank you a thousand times for your kindness in consenting to come to us. We are all very happy in the hope of having you, nor need you be for a moment nervous or uncomfortable from the idea that we shall receive or treat you otherwise than as one of ourselves. I have left my mother and my aunt in the room which is to be yours, devising and arranging matters for you. It is a very small roost, dear H——, but it is the only spare room in our house, and although it is three stories up, it is next to mine, and I hope good neighbourhood will atone for some deficiencies. With regard to interfering with the routine or occupations of the family, they are of a nature which, fortunately for your scruples, renders that impossible. There is but one thing in your letter which rather distressed me: you allude to the inconveniences of a woman travelling in mail coaches in December, and I almost felt, when I read the sentence, what my aunt Dall told me after I had requested you to come to us now, that it was a want of consideration in me to have invited you at so ungenial a season for travelling. I had one reason for doing so which I hope will excuse the apparent selfishness of the arrangement. Towards the end of the spring I shall be leaving town, I hope to come nearer your land, and the beginning of our spring is seldom much more

mild and inviting or propitious for travelling than the winter itself. Then, too, the early spring is the time when our engagements are unavoidably very numerous; to decline going into society is not in my power, and to drag you to my balls (which I love dearly) would, I think, scarce be a pleasure to you (whom I love more), and to go to them when I might be with you would be to run the risk of destroying my taste for the only form of intercourse with my fellow-creatures which is not at present irksome to me. Think, dear H——, if ceasing to dance I should cease to care for universal humanity,—indeed, take to hating it, and become an absolute misanthropist! What a risk!

I have heard nothing more of or from John, but the newspaper reports of the proceedings are rather more favourable than they have been, though I fear one cannot place much reliance on them. I do not know how the papers you see speak of the aspect of affairs in England at this moment; the general feeling seems to be one of relief, and that, whatever apprehensions may have been entertained for the tranquility of the country, the storm has blown over for the present. Everything is quiet again in London and promises to remain so, and there seems to be a sort of "drawing of a long breath" sensation in the state of the public mind, though I cannot myself help thinking not only that we have been, but that we still are, on the eve of some great crisis.

Mrs. Haller is going on very well; it is well spoken of, I am told, and upon the whole it seems to have done me credit, though I am surprised it has, for there

is nothing in the part that gives me the least satisfaction. My next character, I hear, is to be of a very different order of frailty — Calista, in "The Fair Penitent." However odious both play and part are, there are powerful situations in it, and many opportunities for fine acting, but I am afraid I am quite unequal to such a *turpissime* termagant, with whom my aunt did such tremendous things.

My performance of "The Fair Penitent" was entirely ineffective, and did neither me nor the theatre any service; the play itself is a feeble adaptation of Massinger's powerful drama of "The Fatal Dowry," and, as generally happens with such attempts to fit our old plays to our modern stage, the fundamentally objectionable nature of the story could not be reformed without much of the vigorous and terrible effect of the original treatment evaporating in the refining process. Mr. Macready revived Massinger's fine play with considerable success, but both the matter and the manner of our dramatic ancestors is too robust for the audiences of our day, who nevertheless will go and see "Diane de Lys," by a French company of actors, without wincing. Of Mrs. Siddons's Mrs. Haller, one of her admirers once told me that her majestic and imposing person, and the commanding character of her beauty, militated against her effect in the part. "No man, alive or dead," said he, "would have dared to take a liberty with her; wicked she might be, but weak she could not be, and when she told the story of her ill-conduct in the play, nobody believed her." While another of her devotees,

speaking of "The Fair Penitent," said that it was worth sitting out the piece for her scene with Romont alone, and to see "such a splendid animal in such a magnificent rage."

CHAPTER VIII.

My friend left us after a visit of a few weeks, taking my sister to Ireland with her on a visit to Ardgillan.

Great Russell Street, December 21st.

My dearest H——,

My aunt Dall brought me home word that you wished me to send a letter which should meet you on your arrival at Ardgillan; and I would have done so, but that I had previously promised myself that I would do nothing this day till I had copied out the fourth act of "The Star of Seville," and you know unless I am steady at my work this week, I shall break my word a second time, which is *impossible*, as it ought to have been at first.

[A tragedy in five acts, called "The Star of Seville," at which I was working, is here referred to. My father had directed my attention to the subject by putting in my hands a sketch of the life and works of Lope de Vega, by Lord Holland. The story of La Estrella de Seviglia appeared to my father eminently dramatic, and he excited me to choose it for the subject of a drama. I did so, and Messrs. Saunders and Ottley were good enough to publish it; it had no

merit whatever, either dramatic or poetical (although I think the subject gave ample scope for both), and I do not remember a line of it.]

However, it is nine o'clock; I have not ceased writing except to dine, and my act is copied; and now I can give you an hour before bedtime. How are you? and how is dear A——? Give her several good kisses for me; she is by this time admirable friends with all your circle, I doubt not, and slightly, superficially acquainted with the sea. Tell her she is a careless little puss, though, for she forgot the plate with my effigy on it for Hercules [Miss S——'s nephew] which she was to have given my aunt to pack up. I am quite sorry about it; tell him, however, he shall not lose by it, for I will send him both a plate with the Belvidera and a mug with my own natural head on it, the next time you return home.

I stood in the dining-room listening to your carriage wheels until I believe they were only rolling in my imagination; you cannot fancy how doleful our breakfast was. Henry was perfectly enraged at finding that A—— was gone in earnest, and my father began to wonder how it had ever come to pass that he had consented to let her go. After breakfast, Dall and I walked to Mr. Cartwright's (the dentist), who fortunately did not torture me much; for if he had, my spirits were so exceedingly low that I am sure I should have disgraced myself and cried like a coward. As soon as we came home I set to work, and have never stopped copying till I began this letter, when, having done my day's work, I thought I might tell you how much I miss you and dear A——.

My father is gone to the theatre upon business to-night; my mother is very unwell, and Dall and Henry, as well as myself, are stupid and dreary.

My dear H——, tell me how you bore the journey and the cold, and how dear A—— fared on the road; how you found all your people, and how the dell and the sea are looking. Write to me very *soon* and very *long*. You have let several stitches fall in one of the muffetees you knit for me, and it is all running to ruin; I must see and pick them up at the theatre on Thursday night. You have left all manner of things behind you; among others, Channing's two essays. I will keep all your property honestly for you, and shall soon have time to read those essays, which I very much wish to do.

A large supply of Christmas fare arrived from Stafford to-day from my godmother, and among other things, a huge nosegay for me. I was very grateful for the flowers; they are always a pleasure, and to-day I thought they tried to be a consolation to me.

Now I must break off. Do you remember Madame de Sévigné's "Adieu; ce n'est pas jusqu'à demain—jusqu'à samedi—jusqu' aujourd'hui en huit; c'est adieu pour un an"? and yet I certainly have no right to grumble, for our meeting as we have done latterly is a pleasure as little to have been anticipated as the events which have enabled us to do so, and for which I have so many reasons to be thankful. God bless you, dear H——; kiss dear little A—— for me, and remember me affectionately to all your people.

I am yours ever truly,

FANNY.

Dall sends her best love to both, and all; and Henry bids me tell A—— that the name of the Drury Lane pantomime is "Harlequin and Davy Jones, or Mother Carey's Chickens." Ours is yet a secret; he will write her all about it.

Mr. Cartwright, the eminent dentist, was a great friend of my father's; he was a cultivated gentleman of refined taste, and an enlightened judge and liberal patron of the arts. If anything could have alleviated the half-hour's suspense before one obtained admission to his beautiful library, which was on some occasions (of, I suppose, slight importance) his "operating-room," it would have been the choice specimens of lovely landscape painting, by the first English masters, which adorned his dining-room. I have sat by Sir Thomas Lawrence at the hospitable dinner-table, where Mr. Cartwright gave his friends the most agreeable opportunity of using the teeth which he preserved for them, and heard in his house the best classical English vocal music, capitally executed by the first professors of that school, and brilliant amicable rivalry of first-rate pianoforte performances by Cramer, Neukomm, Hummel, and Moscheles, who were all personal friends of their host.

Great Russell Street, January 3, 1831.

My dear H——,

I promised you, in the interesting P.S. I annexed to my aunt Dall's letter, to write to you to-day, and I sit down this evening to fulfil my promise. My father is gone out to dinner, my

mother is asleep on the sofa, Dall reclines dozing in that blissful armchair you wot of, and Henry, happier than either, is extended snoring before the fire on the softest, thickest, splendidest coloured rug (a piece of my mother's workmanship) that the most poetical canine imagination could conceive; I should think an earthly type of those heavenly rugs which virtuous dogs, according to your creed, are destined to enjoy.

[My friend Miss S—— held (without having so eloquently advocated) the theory of her and my friend Miss Cobbe, of the possible future existence of animals; such animals at any rate as had formed literally a precious part of the earthly existence of their owners, and in whom a certain sense, so nearly resembling conscience, is developed, by their obedience and attachment to the superior race, that it is difficult to consider them *unmoral* creatures. Perhaps, however, if the choice were given our four-footed friends to share our future prospects and present responsibility, they might decline the offer, "Thankfu' they werena' men, but dogs."]

Dear H——, the pleasant excitement of your society assisted the natural contentedness or indifference of my disposition to throw aside many reflections upon myself and others, the life I lead and its various annoyances, which have been unpleasantly forced upon me since your departure; and when I say that I do not feel happy, you will not count it merely the blue-devilish fancy of a German brain or an English (that is bilious) stomach.

I have a feeling, not of dissatisfaction or discontent

so much as of sadness and weariness, though I struggle always and sometimes pretty successfully to rouse myself from it.

You say you wish to know what we did on Christmas Day. I'll tell you. In the morning I went to church, after which I came home and copied "The Star of Seville" till dinner-time. After dinner my mother, who had proposed spending the evening at our worthy pastor's, Mr. Sterky's, finding my father disinclined for that exertion, remained at home and went to sleep; my father likewise, Dall likewise, Henry likewise; and I copied on at my play till bedtime: *voilà*. On Monday, contrary to my expectation, I had to play Euphrasia before the pantomime. You know we were to spend Christmas Eve at my aunt Siddons's; we had a delightful evening and I was very happy. My aunt came down from the drawing-room (for we danced in the dining-room on the ground floor) and sat among us, and you cannot think how nice and pretty it was to see her surrounded by her clan, more than three dozen strong; some of them so handsome, and many with a striking likeness to herself, either in feature or expression. Mrs. Harry and Cecy danced with us, and we enjoyed ourselves very much; I wished for dear A—— exceedingly. Wednesday we dined at Mrs. Mayow's.

[My mother's dear friend, Mrs. Mayow, was the wife of a gentleman in a high position in one of our Government offices. She was a West Indian creole, and a singularly beautiful person. Her complexion was of the clear olive-brown of a perfectly Moorish skin, with the colour of a damask rose in her cheeks,

and lips as red as coral. Her features were classically symmetrical, as was the soft, oval contour of her face; her eyes and hair were as black as night, and the former had a halo of fine lashes of the most magnificent length. She never wore any head-dress but a white muslin turban, the effect of which on her superb dark face was strikingly handsome, and not only its singularity but its noble and becoming simplicity distinguished her in every assembly, amid the various fantastic head-gear of each successive Parisian "fashion of the day." As a girl she had been remarkably slender, but she grew to an enormous size, without the increased bulk of her person disfiguring or rendering coarse her beautiful face.]

Thursday I acted Lady Townley, and acted it abominably ill, and was much mortified to find that Cecilia had got my cousin Harry to chaperon her two boys to the play that night; because, as he never before went to see me act, it is rather provoking that the only time he did so I should have sent him to sleep, which he gallantly assured me I did. I do not find cousins so much more polite than brothers (one's natural born plagues). Harry's compliment to my acting had quite a brotherly tenderness, I think. Friday, New Year's Eve, we went to a ball at Mrs. G——'s, which I did not much enjoy; and yesterday, New Year's Day, Henry and I spent the evening at Mrs. Harry's. There was no one there but Cecy and her two boys, and we danced, almost without stopping, from eight till twelve.

[The lads my cousin Cecilia called her boys were the two younger sons of her brother George Siddons,

Mrs. Siddons's eldest son, then and for many years after collector of the port at Calcutta. These lads and their sisters were being educated in England, and were spending their Christmas holidays with their grandmother, Mrs. Siddons. The youngest of these three schoolboys, Henry, was the father of the beautiful Mrs. Scott-Siddons of the present day. It was in the house of my cousin George Siddons, then one of the very pleasantest and gayest in Calcutta, that his young nephew Harry, son of his sister-in-law, my dear Mrs. Harry Siddons, was to find a home on his arrival in India, and subsequently a wife in Harriet, the second daughter of the house.]

I am to act Juliet to morrow, and Calista on Thursday; Friday and Saturday I am to act Mrs. Haller and Lady Townley at Brighton. I shall see the sea, that's one comfort, and it will be something to live upon for some time to come. Next Wednesday week I am to come out in Bianca, in Milman's "Fazio." Do you know the play? It is very powerful, and my part is a very powerful one indeed. I have hopes it may succeed greatly. Mr. Warde is to be my Fazio, for, I hear, people object to my having my father's constant support, and wish to see me act *alone;* what geese, to be sure! I wonder whether they think my father has hold of strings by the means of which he moves my arms and legs! I am very glad something likely to strike the public is to be given before "Inez de Castro" (a tragedy of Miss Mitford's), for it will need all the previous success of a fine play and part to carry us safely through that.

I have not seen Mr. Murray again; I conclude he is out of town just now.

We have made all inquiries about poor dear A——'s trunk, and of course, as soon as we hear of it, it will be sent to her; I am very sorry for her, poor dear little child, but I advise her, when she does get them, to put on each of her new dresses for an hour by turns, and sit opposite the glass in them. Good-bye, dear H——. Your affectionate

F. K.

Great Russell Street, 6th January, 1831.

DEAREST H——,

I have only time to say two words to you, for I am in the midst of preparations for our flight to Brighton, to-morrow. Thank you for your last letter; I liked it very much, and will answer it at length when we come back to town.

Mr. Murray has got my MSS., but I have yet heard nothing about it from him. My fire is not in that economical invention, the "miserable basket" [an iron frame fitting inside our common-sized grate to limit the extravagant consumption of coal], but well spread out in the large comfortable grate; yet I am sitting with my door and windows all wide open; it is a lovely, bright, mild, spring day. I do not lose my time any more of a morning watching the fire kindling, for the housemaid lights it before I get out of bed, so my poetry and philosophy are robbed of a most interesting subject of meditation.

With regard to what you say about A——, I do not know that I expected her to love, though I was sure she would admire, nature; she is very young yet, and her quick, observant mind and tendency to wit

and sarcasm make human beings more amusing, if not more interesting, to her than inanimate objects. It is not the beauty of nature alone, as it appeals merely to our senses, that produces that passionate love for it which induces us to prefer communion with it to the intercourse of our fellows. The elevated trains of thought, and the profound and sublime aspirations which the external beauty of the world suggests, draw and rivet our mind and soul to its contemplation, and produce a sort of awful sense of companionship with the Unseen, which cannot, I think, be an experience of early youth. For then the volatile, vivid, and various spirit, with its sympathizing and communicative tendency, has a strong propensity to spend itself on that which can return its value in like commodity; and exchange of thought and feeling is a preponderating desire and necessity, and human fellowship and intercourse is naturally attractive to unworn and unwearied human nature. I suppose the consolatory element in the beautiful *un*human world in which we live is not often fully appreciated by the young, they want comparatively so little of it; youth is itself so thoroughly its own consoler. Some years hence, I dare say A—— will love both the sea and sky better than she does now. To a certain degree, too, the love of solitude, which generally accompanies a deep love for nature, is a kind of selfishness that does not often exist in early life.

I am desired to close this letter immediately; I have therefore only time to add that I act Calista to-night here, Mrs. Haller to-morrow at Brighton, and Saturday, also there, Lady Townley. On Monday I

act Juliet here, and on Wednesday Bianca in "Fazio,"—when pray for me! Now you know where to think of me. I will write to you a *real* letter on Sunday.

Kiss A—— for me, and do not be unhappy, my dear, for you will soon see me again; and in the mean time I advise you, as you think my picture so much more agreeable than myself, to console yourself with that. Good-bye.

Your affectionate

FANNY.

The fascination of sitting by a brook and watching the lapsing water, or, on the sands, the oncoming, uprising, breaking, and melting away of the white wave-crests, is, I suppose, matter of universal experience. I do not know whether watching fire has the same irresistible attraction for everybody. It has almost a stronger charm for me; and the hours I have spent sitting on the rug in front of my grate, and watching the wonderful creature sparkling and glowing there, have been almost more than I dare remember. I was obliged at last, in order not to waste half my day in the contemplation of this bewitching element, to renounce a practice I long indulged in of lighting my own fire; but to this moment I envy the servant who does that office, or should envy her but that she never remains on her knees worshipping the beautiful, subtle spirit she has evoked, as I could still find it in my heart to do.

I think I remember that Shelley had this passion for fire-gazing; it's a comfort to think that whatever

he could *say*, he could never *see* more enchanting things in his grate than I have in mine; but indeed, even for Shelley, the motions and the colours of flames are unspeakable.

Great Russell Street, January 9, 1831.

DEAR H——,

I promised you a letter to-day, and if I can do so now, at least I will begin to keep my promise, though I think it possible my courage may fail me after the first side of my sheet of paper. We arrived in town from Brighton on this afternoon at four o'clock, and though it is not yet ten I am so weary, and have so much to do to-morrow (rehearsing "Fazio" and acting Juliet), that I think I shall not sit up much longer to-night, even to write to you.

We found my mother tolerably well, and Henry, who had been out skating all day, in great beauty and high spirits. I must now tell you what I had not room for when I wrote you those few lines in A——'s letter.

Mr. Barton, a friend of John's who travelled with him in Germany, and whose sister has lately married John Sterling (of whom you have often heard us speak), called here the other day, and during the course of a long visit told us a great deal of the very beginning of this Spanish expedition, and of the share Mr. Sterling and Richard Trench [the present venerable archbishop of Dublin] had in its launching.

It seems (though he would not say whence they derived them) that they were plentifully supplied with funds, with which they purchased and manned a

vessel destined to carry arms and ammunition to Spain for the purposes of the revolutionists. This ship they put under command of an experienced *smuggler*, and it was actually leaving the mouth of the Thames with Sterling and Mr. Trench on board it, bound for Spain, when by order of Lord Aberdeen it was stopped. Our two young gentlemen jumped into a boat and made their escape, but Mr. Sterling, hearing that government threatened to proceed against the captain of the captured vessel, came forward and owned it as his property, and exonerated the man, as far as he could, from any share of the blame attaching to an undertaking in which he was an irresponsible instrument. Matters were in this state, with a prosecution pending over John Sterling, when the ministry was changed, and nothing further has been done or said by government on the subject since.

My brother had gone off to Gibraltar previously to all this, to take measures for facilitating their landing; he is now quietly and I hope comfortably wintering there. Torrijos, it seems, is not at all disheartened, but is waiting for the propitious moment, which, however, from the appearance of things, I should not consider likely to be at hand just yet. Mr. Sterling has, I understand, been so seriously ill since his marriage that at one time his life was despaired of, and even now that he is a little recovered he is ordered to Madeira as soon as he can be moved. This is very sad for his poor bride.

Of our home circle I have nothing to tell you. My father, Dall, and I had a very delightful day on Saturday at Brighton. After a lovely day's journey,

we arrived there on Friday. Our companion in the coach luckily happened to be a son of Dr. Burney's, who was an old and intimate friend of my father's, and they discoursed together the whole way along, of all sorts of events and people: of my uncle John and my aunt Siddons, in their prime; of Mrs. Jordan and the late king; of the present one, Harlow, Lawrence, and innumerable other folk of note and notoriety. Among other things they had a long discussion on the subject of Hamlet's feigned or—as my father maintains and I believe—real madness; all this formed a very amusing accompaniment to the history of Sir Launcelot du Lac, which I was reading with much delight when I was not listening to their conversation.

I like all that concerns the love adventures of these valorous knights of yore; but their deadly blows and desperate thrusts, their slashing, gashing, mashing, mangling, and hewing bore me to death. The fate of Guinevere interested me deeply, but Sir Launcelot's warlike exploits I got dreadfully weary of; I prefer him greatly in hall and bower rather than in tournament and battle-field.

We got into Brighton at half-past four, and had just time to dine, dress, and go to the theatre, where we were to act "The Stranger." The house was very full indeed, but my reception was not quite what I had expected; for whether they were disappointed in my dress (Mrs. Haller being traditionally clothed in droopacious white muslin, and I dressing her in grey silk, which is both stiff and dull looking, as I think it should be), or whether, which I think still more likely,

they were disappointed in my "personal appearance," which, as you know, is neither tragical nor heroic, I know not, but I thought their welcome rather cold; but the truth is, I believe my London audience spoils me for every other. However, the play went off admirably, and I believe everybody was satisfied, not excepting the manager, who assured me so full and *enthusiastic* a house had not been seen in Brighton for many years.

Our rooms at the inn [the old Ship was then *the* famous Brighton hotel] looked out upon the sea, but it was so foggy when we entered Brighton that although I perceived the *motion* of the waves through the mist that hung over them, their colour and every object along the shore was quite indistinct. The next morning was beautiful. Dall and I ran down to the beach before breakfast; there are no sands, unluckily, but we stood ankle-deep in the shingles, watching the ebbing tide and sniffing the sweet salt air for a long time with great satisfaction. After breakfast we rehearsed "The Provoked Husband," and from the theatre proceeded to take a walk.

All this was very fine, but still it was streets and houses; and there were crowds of gay people parading up and down, looking as busy about nothing and as full of themselves as if the great awful sea had not been close beside them. In fact, I was displeased with the levity of their deportment, and the contrast of all that fashionable frivolity with the grandest of all natural objects seemed to me incongruous and discordant; and I was so annoyed at finding myself by the sea-side and *yet* still surrounded with all the

glare and gaiety of London, that I think I wished myself at the bottom of the cliff and Brighton at the bottom of the sea. However, we walked on and on, beyond the Parade, beyond the town, till we had nothing but the broad open downs to contrast with the broad open sea, and then I was completely happy. I gave my muff to my father and my fur tippet to Dall, for the sun shone powerfully on the heights, and I walked and ran along the edge of the cliffs, gazing and pondering, and enjoying the solemn sound and the brilliant sight, and the nervous excitement of a slight sense of fear as I peeped over at the depth below me. From this diversion, however, my father called me away, and, to console me for not allowing me to run the risk of being dashed to pieces, offered to run a race up a small hill with me, and beat me hollow.

We had walked about four miles when we halted at one of the Preventive Service stations to look about us. The tide had not yet come in, but its usual height when up was indicated, first by a delicate, waving fringe of sea-weed, like very bright green moss, and then, nearer in shore, by an incrustation of chalk washed from the cliffs, which formed a deep embossed silver embroidery along the coast as far as eye could see. The sunshine was dazzling, and its light on the detached masses of milky chalk which lay far beneath us made them appear semi-transparent, like fragments of alabaster or carnelian. I was wishing that I *could but* get down the cliff, when a worthy sailor appeared toiling up it, and I discovered his winding staircase cut in the great chalk wall, down which I proceeded

without further ado. I was a little frightened, for the steps were none of the most regular or convenient, and I felt as if I were hanging (and at an uncomfortable distance from either) between heaven and earth. I got down safe, however, and ran to the water's edge, danced a galop on one smooth little sand island, waited till the tide, which was coming up, just touched my toes, gave it a kick of cowardly defiance, and then showed it a fair pair of heels and scrambled up the cliff again, very much enchanted with my expedition.

I think a fight with smugglers up that steep staircase at night, with a heavy sea rolling and roaring close under it, would be glorious! When I reached the top my father said it was time to go home, so we returned. The Parade was crowded like Hyde Park in the height of the season [Thackeray called Brighton London-super-Mare], and when once I was out of the crowd and could look down upon it from our windows as it promenaded up and down, I never saw anything gayer: carriages of every description—most of them open,—cavalcades of ladies and gentlemen riding to and fro, throngs of smart bonnets and fine dresses; and beyond all this the high tide, with one broad crimson path across it, thrown by the sun, looking as if it led into some enchanted world beyond the waters.

I thought of dear A——; for though she is seeing the sea—and I think the sea at Ardgillan, with its lovely mountains on one side and Skerries on the other, far more beautiful than this,—I am sure she would have been enchanted with the life, the bustle, and brilliancy of the Parade combined with its fine sea

view, for I, who am apt rather selfishly to wish myself alone in the enjoyment of nature, looked at the bright, moving throng with pleasure when once I was out of it.

Our house at the theatre at night was very fine; and now, as you are perhaps tired of Brighton, you will not be sorry to get home with me; but pray communicate the end of our "land sorrow" to A——. We were to start for London Sunday morning at ten [a journey of six hours by coach, now of less than two by rail], and my father had taken three inside places in a coach, which was to call for us at our inn. I ran down to the beach and had a few moments alone there. It was a beautiful morning, and the fishing boats were one by one putting out into the calmest sleepy sea. I longed to ask to be taken on board one of them; but I was summoned away to the coach, and found on reaching it that, the fourth place being occupied by a sickly looking woman with a sickly looking child nearly as big as herself in her lap, my father, notwithstanding the coldness of the morning, had put himself on the outside. I went to sleep; from which blessed refuge of the wretched I was recalled by a powerful and indescribable smell, which, seizing me by the nose, naturally induced me to open my eyes. Mother and daughter were each devouring a lump of black, strong, greasy plum cake; as a specific, I presume, against (or for?) sickness in a stage-coach.

The late Duke of Beaufort, when Marquis of Worcester, used frequently to amuse himself by driving the famous fast Brighton coach, the Highflyer. One

day, as my father was hastily depositing his shilling gratuity in his driver's outstretched hand, a shout of laughter, and a "Thank ye, Charles Kemble," made him aware of the gentleman Jehu under whose care he had performed the journey.

Wednesday, January 12, 1831.

DEAREST H——,

I received your letter dated the 7th the night before last, and purposed ending this long epistle yesterday evening with an answer to it, but was prevented by having to go with my mother to dine with Mrs. L——, that witty woman and more than middle-aged beauty you have heard me speak of. I was repaid for the exertion I had not made very willingly, for I had a pleasant dinner. This lady has a large family and very large fortune, which at her death goes to her eldest son, who is a young man of enthusiastically religious views and feelings; he has no profession or occupation, but devotes himself to building chapels and schools, which he himself superintends with unwearied assiduity; and though he has never taken orders, he preaches at some place in the city, to which crowds of people flock to hear him; none of which is at all agreeable to his mother, whose chief anxiety, however, is lest some one of the fair Methodists who attend his exhortations should admire his earthly expectations as much as his heavenly prospects, and induce this young apostle to marry her for her soul's sake; all which his mother told mine, with many lamentations over the godly zeal of her "serious" son, certainly not often made with regard to young

men who are likely to inherit fine fortunes and estates. One of this young gentleman's sisters is strongly imbued with the same religious feeling, and I think her impressions deepened by her very delicate state of health. I am much attracted by her gentle manner, and the sweet, serious expression of her face, and the earnest tone of her conversation; I like her very much.

My mother is reading Moore's "Life of Byron," and has fallen in love with the latter and in hate with his wife. She declares that hewas originally good, generous, humble, religious,—indeed, everything that a man can be, short of absolute perfection. She thinks me narrow-minded and prejudiced because I do not care to read his life, and because, in spite of all Moore's assertions, I maintain that with Byron's own works in one's hand his character cannot possibly be a riddle to anybody. I dare say the devil may sometimes be painted blacker than he is; but Byron has a fancy for the character of Lucifer, and seems to me, on the contrary, *très pauvre diable*. I have no idea that Byron was half fiend, half man, (at least, no more so than all of us are); I dare say he was not at all really an atheist, as he has been reputed; indeed, I do not think Lord Byron, in spite of all the fuss that has been made about him, was by any means an uncommon character. His genius was indeed rare, but his pride, vanity, and selfishness were only so in degree. You know, H——, nobody was ever a more fanatical worshipper of his poetry than I was: time was that I devoured his verses (poison as they were to me) like "raspberry tarts;" I still know, and remember with

delight, their exquisite beauty and noble vigour, but they don't agree with me. And, without knowing anything of his religious doubts or moral delinquencies, I cannot at all agree with Mr. Moore that upon the showing of his own works Byron was a "good man." If he was, no one has done him such injustice as himself; and if *he* was *good*, then what was Milton? and what genial and gentle Shakespeare?

Good-bye, dear H——; write me a long "thank you" for this longest of mortal letters, and believe that I am your ever affectionate

F. A. K.

I began living upon my allowance on New Year's Day, and am keeping a most rigorous account of every farthing I spend. I have a tolerable "acquisitiveness" among my other organs, but think I would rather get than keep money, and to earn would always be pleasanter to me than to save. I act in "Fazio" to-night, Friday, and Monday next, so you will know where to find me on those evenings.

Monday, 27th.

Dear H——,

Horace Twiss has been out of town, and I have been obliged to delay this for a frank. You will be glad, I know, to hear that "Fazio" has made a great hit. Milman is coming to see me in it to-night; I wish I could induce him to write me such another part.

We are over head and ears in the mire of chancery again. The question of the validity of our—the great theatre—patents is now before Lord Brougham; I am

afraid they are not worth a farthing. I am to hear from Mr. Murray some day this week; considering the features of my handwriting, it is no wonder it has taken him some time to become acquainted with the MSS.

Great Russell Street, January 29, 1831.

My dear H——,

All our occupations have been of a desultory and exciting kind, and all our doings and sayings have been made matter of surprise and admiring comment; of course, therefore, we are disinclined for anything like serious or solid study, and naturally conclude that sayings and doings so much admired and wondered at *are* admirable and astonishing. A—— is possessed of strong powers of ridicule, and the union of this sarcastic vein with a vivid imagination seems to me unusual; their prey is so different that they seldom hunt in company, I think. When I heard that she was reading "Mathilde" (Madame Cottin), I was almost afraid of its effect upon her. I remember at school, when I was her age, crying three whole days and half nights over it; but I sadly overrated her sensibility. Her letter to me contained a summary, abusive criticism of "Mathilde" as a book, and ended by presenting to me one of those ludicrous images which I abhor, because, while they destroy every serious or elevated impression, they are so absurd that one cannot defend one's self from the "idiot laughter" they excite, and leave one no associations but grinning ones with one's romantic ideals. Her letters are very clever and make me laugh exceed-

ingly, but I am sorry she has such a detestation of Mrs. Marcet and natural philosophy. As for her letters being shown about, I am not sorry that my indiscretion has relieved A—— from a restraint which, if it had only been disagreeable to her, would not have mattered so much, but which is calculated to destroy all possibility of free and natural correspondence, and inevitably renders letters mere compositions and their young authors vain and pretentious. I have always thought the system a bad one, for under it, if a girl's letters are thought dull, she feels as if she had made a failure, and if they are laughed at and passed from hand to hand with her knowledge, the result is much worse; and in either case, what she writes is no longer the simple expression of her thoughts and feelings, but samples of wit, ridicule, and comic fancy which are to be thought amusing and clever by others than those to whom they are addressed.

You say my mother in her note to you speaks well of my acting in Bianca. It has succeeded very well, and I think I act some of it very well; but my chief pleasure in its success was certainly her approbation. She is a very severe critic, and, as she censures sharply, I am only too thankful when I escape her condemnation. I think you will be pleased with Bianca. I was surprised when I came to act it at finding how terribly it affected me, for I am not naturally at all jealous, and in this play, while feigning to be so, it seemed to me that it must be really the most horrible suffering conceivable; I am almost sorry that I can imagine it well enough to represent it well.

You say that we love intellect, but I do not agree

with you; I do not think intellect excites love. I do not even think that it increases our love for those we do love, though it adds admiration to our affection. I certainly do admire intellect immensely; mental power, which allied to moral power, goodness, is a force to uphold the universe.

I have forsworn all discussions about Byron; my mother and I differ so entirely on the subject that, as I cannot adopt her view of his character, I find it easier to be silent about my own. Perhaps her extreme admiration of him may have thrown me into a deeper disapprobation than I should otherwise have expressed. He has many excuses, doubtless: the total want of early restraint, the miserable influence of the injudicious mother who alternately idolized and victimized him, the bitter castigation of his first plunge into literature, and then the flattering, fawning, fulsome adoration of his habitual associates, of course were all against him; but, after all, one cannot respect the man who strikes colours to the enemy as one does the one who comes conqueror out of the conflict. I now believe that there is a great deal of unreality in those sentiments to which the charm of his verses lent an appearance of truth and depth; in fact, his poetical feelings will sometimes stand the test of sober reflection quite as little as his grammar will that of a severe application of the rules of syntax. He has written immensely for mere effect, but all young people read him, and young people are not apt to analyse closely what they feel strongly, and, judging by my own experience, I should think Byron had done more mischief than one would like to

be answerable for. When I said this the other day to my mother, she replied by referring to his "Don Juan," supposing that I alluded to his profligacy; but it is not "Don Juan" only or chiefly that I think so mischievous, but "Manfred," "Cain," "Lucifer," "Childe Harold," and through them all Byron's own spirit—the despondent, defiant, questioning, murmuring, bitter, proud spirit, that acts powerfully and dangerously on young brains and throws poison into their natural fermentation.

Since you say that my perpetual quotation of that stupid song, "Old Wilson is Dead," worries you, I will renounce my delight in teasing you with it. The love of teasing is, of course, only a base form of the love of power. Mr. Harness and I had a long discussion the other night about the Cenci; he maintains your opinion, that the wicked old nobleman was absolutely mad; but I argued the point stoutly for his sanity, and very nearly fell into the fire with dismay when I was obliged to confess that if he was not mad, then his actuating motive was simply *the love of power*. Do you know that that play was sent over by Shelley to England with a view to Miss O'Neill acting Beatrice Cenci? If it were ever possible that the piece could be acted, I should think an audience might be half killed with the horror of that entrance of Beatrice when she describes the marble pavement sliding from beneath her feet.

Did my mother tell you in her note that Milman was at the play the other night, and said I had made Bianca exactly what he intended? I wish he would write another tragedy. I think perhaps he will, from

something Murray said the other day. That eminent publisher still has my MSS. in his possession, but you know I can take things easily, and I don't feel anxious about his decision. I act in "Fazio" Monday and Wednesday, and Friday and Saturday Mrs. Beverley and Belvidera at Brighton.

I was inexpressibly relieved by receiving a letter from my brother, and the intelligence that if I answered him he would be able to receive my reply, which I made immediate speed to send him.

Great Russell Street.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

My brother John is alive, safe and well, in Gibraltar. You deserve to know this, but it is all I can say to you. My mother has suffered so much that she hardly feels her joy; it has broken her down, and I, who have borne up well till now, feel prostrated by this reprieve. God be thanked for all his mercies! I can say no more.

F. A. K.

CHAPTER IX.

Great Russell Street, February 7, 1831.

My dear H——,

I found your lecture waiting for me on my return from Brighton; I call it thus because if your two last were less than letters your yesterday's one is more; but I shall not attempt at present to follow you to the misty heights whither our nature tends, or dive with you into the muddy depths whence it springs. I have heard from my brother John, and now expect almost hourly to see him. The Spanish revolution, as he now sees and as many foresaw, is a mere vision. The people are unready, unripe, unfit, and therefore unwilling; had it not been so they would have done their work themselves; it is as impossible to urge on the completion of such a change before the time as to oppose it when the time is come. John now writes that, all hope of rousing the Spaniards being over, and their party consequently dispersing, he is thinking of bending his steps homewards, and talks of once more turning his attention to the study of the law. I know not what to say or think. My cousin, Horace Twiss, was put into Parliament by Lord Clarendon, but the days of

such parliamentary patronage are numbered, and I do not much deplore it, though I sometimes fancy that the House of Commons, could it by any means have been opened to him, might perhaps have been the best sphere for John. His natural abilities are brilliant. and his eloquence, energy, and activity of mind might perhaps have been made more and more quickly available for good purposes in that than in any other career.

I am not familiar with all that Burns has written; I have read his letters, and know most of his songs by heart. His passions were so violent that he seems to me in that respect to have been rather a subject for poetry than a poet; for though a poet should perhaps have a strongly passionate nature, he should also have power enough over it to be able to observe, describe, and, if I may so say, experimentalize with it, as he would with the passions of others. I think it would better qualify a man to be a poet to be able to perceive rather than liable to feel violent passion or emotion. May not such things be known of without absolute experience? What is the use of the poetical imagination, that lower inspiration, which, like the higher one of faith, is the "evidence of things not seen"? Troubled and billowy waters reflect nothing distinctly on their surface; it is the still, deep, placid element that gives back the images by which it is surrounded or that pass over its surface. I do not of course believe that a good man is necessarily a poet, but I think a devout man is almost always a man with a poetical imagination; he is familiar with ideas which are essentially sublime, and

in the act of adoration he springs to the source of all beauty through the channel by which our spirits escape most effectually from their chain, the flesh, and their prison-house, the world, and rise into communion with that supreme excellence from which they originally emanated and into whose bosom they will return. I cannot now go into all I think about this, for I have so many other things to talk about. Since I began this letter I have heard a report that John is a prisoner, that he has been arrested and sent to Madrid. Luckily I do not believe a word of this; if he has rendered himself obnoxious to the British authorities in Gibraltar they may have locked him up for a week or two there, and I see no great harm in that; but that he should have been delivered to the Spaniards and sent to Madrid I do not believe, because I know that the whole revolutionary party is going to pieces, and that they have neither the power nor the means to render themselves liable to such a disagreeable distinction. We expect him home every day. Only conceive, dear H——, the ill-fortune that attends us: my father, or rather the theatre, is involved in *six* lawsuits! He and my mother are neither of them quite well; anxiety naturally has much share in their indisposition.

I learnt Beatrice this morning, and the whole of it, in an hour, which I tell you because I consider it a feat. I am delighted at the thoughts of acting it; it will be the second part which I shall have acted with real pleasure; Portia is the other, but Beatrice is not nearly so nice. I am to act it next Thursday, when pray think of me.

I do not know whether you have seen anything in the papers about a third theatre; we have had much anxiety, vexation, and expense about it, but I have no doubt that Mr. Arnold will carry the question. The great people want a plaything for this season, and have set their hearts upon that. I acted Belvidera to my father's Jaffier at Brighton; you cannot imagine how great a difference it produced in my acting. Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill had a great advantage over me in their tragic partners. Have you heard that Mr. Hope, the author of "Anastasius," is just dead? That was a wonderfully clever book, of rather questionable moral effects, I think; the same sort of cynical gloom and discontent which pervade Byron's writings prevail in that; and I thought it a pity, because in other respects it seems a genuine book, true to life and human nature. A few days before I heard of his death, Mr. Harness was discussing with me a theory of Hope's respecting the destiny of the human soul hereafter. His notion is that all spirit is after death to form but one whole spiritual existence, a sort of *lumping* which I object to. I should like always to be able to know myself from somebody else.

I *do* read the papers sometimes, dear H——, and, whenever I do, I wonder at you and all sensible people who make a daily practice of it; the proceedings of Parliament would make one angry if they did not make one so sad, and some of the debates would seem to me laughable but that I know they are lamentable.

I have just finished Channing's essay on Milton, which is admirable.

My cousin Harry sails for India on Thursday; his mother is making a brave fight of it, poor soul! I met them all at my aunt Siddons's last night; she was remarkably well, and "charming," as she styles herself when that is the case. Good-bye. Always affectionately yours,

FANNY.

I suppose it is one of the peculiarities of the real poetical temperament to receive, as it were, a double impression of its own phenomena—one through the senses, affections, and passions, and one through the imagination,—and to have a perpetual tendency to make intellectual capital of the experiences of its own sensuous, sentimental, and passionate nature. In the above letter, written so many years ago, I have used the term *experimentalizing* with his own nature as the process of a poet's mind; but though self-consciousness and self-observation are almost inseparable from the poetical organization, Goethe is the only instance I know of what could, with any propriety, be termed self-experimentalizing,—he who wrung the heart and turned the head of the whole reading Europe of his day by his own love passages with Madame Kestner transcribed into "The Sorrows of Werther."

Self-illustration is perhaps a better term for the result of that passionate egotism which is so strong an element in the nature of most poets, and the secret of so much of their power. *Ils s'intéressent tellement à ce qui les regarde*, that they interest us profoundly in it too, and by the law of our common nature, and the

sympathy that pervades it, their great difference from their kind serves but to enforce their greater likeness to it.

Goethe's nature, however, was not at all a predominantly passionate one; so much the contrary, indeed, that one hardly escapes the impression all through his own record of his life that he *felt* through his overmastering intellect rather than his heart; and that he analysed too well the processes of his own feelings ever to have been carried by them beyond the permission of his will, or out of sight of that æsthetic self-culture, that development, which really seems to have been his prevailing passion. A strong histrionic vein mixes, too, with his more imaginative mental qualities, and perpetually reveals itself in his assumption of fictitious characters, in his desire for producing "situations" in his daily life, and in his conscious "effects" upon those whom he sought to impress.

His genius sometimes reminds me of Ariel—the subtle spirit who, observing from aloof, as it were, (that is, from the infinite distance of his own *unmoral*, demoniacal nature), the follies and sins and sorrows of humanity, understands them all and sympathizes with none of them; and describes, with equal indifference, the drunken, brutish delight in his music expressed by the coarse Neapolitan buffoons and the savage gorilla, Caliban, and the abject self-reproach and bitter, poignant remorse exhibited by Antonio and his fellow conspirators; telling Prospero that if *he* saw them he would pity them, and adding, in his passionless perception of their anguish, "I should, sir, *were I human.*"

There is a species of remote partiality in Goethe's mode of delineating the sins and sorrows of his fellows, that seems hardly human and still less divine; "*Das ist dämonisch,*" to use his own expression about Shakespeare, who, however, had nothing whatever in common with that quality of moral *neutrality* of the great German genius.

Perhaps nothing indicates what I should call Goethe's intellectual *unhumanity* so much as his absolute want of sympathy with the progress of the race. He was but mortal man, however, though he had the head of Jove, and Pallas Athena might have sprung all armed from it. Once, and once only, if I remember rightly, in his conversations with Eckermann, the cause of mankind elicits an expression of faith and hope from him, in some reference to the future of America. I recollect, on reading the second part of "Faust" with my friend Abeken (assuredly the most competent of all expounders of that extraordinary composition), when I asked him what was the signification of that final cultivation of the barren sea sand, in Faust's blind old age, and cried, "Is it possible that he wishes to indicate the hopelessness of all attempt at progress?" his replying, "I am afraid he was no believer in it." And so it comes that his letters to Madame von Stein leave one only amazed with the more sorrowful admiration that the unrivalled genius of the civilized world in its most civilized age found perfect satisfaction in the inane routine of the life of a court dignitary in a petty German principality.

It is worthy of note how, in the two instances of his

great masterpieces, "Faust" and "Wilhelm Meister," Goethe has worked up in a sequel all the superabundant material he had gathered for his subject; and in each case how the life-blood of the poet pulses through the first part, while the second is, as it were, a mere storehouse of splendid intellectual supply which he has wrought into elaborate phantasmagoria, dazzling in their brilliancy and wonderful in their variety, but all alike difficult to comprehend and sympathize with, —the rare mental fragments, precious like diamond dust, left after the cutting of those two perfect gems.

Free-trade had hardly uttered a whisper yet upon any subject of national importance when the monopoly of theatrical property was attacked by Mr. Arnold, of the English Opera House, who assailed the patents of the two great theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and demanded that the right to act the legitimate drama (till then their especial privilege) should be extended to all British subjects desirous to open play-houses and perform plays. A lawsuit ensued, and the proprietors of the great houses—"his Majesty's servants," by his Majesty's royal patent since the days of the merry monarch—defended their monopoly to the best of their ability. My father, questioned before a committee of the House of Commons upon the subject, showed forth the evils likely, in his opinion, to result to the dramatic art and the public taste by throwing open to unlimited speculation the right to establish theatres and give theatrical representations. The great companies of good sterling actors would be broken up and dispersed, and there would no longer exist establishments sufficiently important to maintain

any large body of them; the best plays would no longer find adequate representatives in any but a few of the principal parts, the characters of theatrical pieces produced would be lowered, the school of fine and careful acting would be lost, no play of Shakespeare's could be decorously put on the stage, and the profession and the public would alike fare the worse for the change. But he was one of the patented proprietors, one of the monopolists, a party most deeply interested in the issue, and therefore, perhaps, an incompetent judge in the matter. The cause went against us, and every item of his prophecy concerning the stage has undoubtedly come to pass. The fine companies of the great theatres were dissolved, and each member of the body that together formed so bright a constellation went off to be the solitary star or planet of some minor sphere. The best plays no longer found decent representatives for any but one or two of their first parts; the pieces of more serious character and higher pretension as dramatic works were supplanted by burlesques and parodies of themselves; the school of acting of the Kembles, Young, the Keans, Macready, and their contemporaries, gave place to no school at all of very clever ladies and gentlemen, who certainly had no pretension to act tragedy or declaim blank verse, but who played low comedy better than high, and lowest farce best of all, and who for the most part wore the clothes of the sex to which they did not belong. Shakespeare's plays *all* became historical, and the profession was decidedly the worse for the change; I am not aware, however, that the public has suffered much by it.

Great Russell Street, March 5, 1831.

My dearest H——,

I am extremely obliged to you for your long account of Mrs. John Kemble, and all the details respecting her with which, as you knew how intensely interesting they were likely to be to me, you have so kindly filled your letter. Another time, if you can afford to give a page or two to her interesting dog, Pincher, I shall be still more grateful; you know it is but omitting the superfluous word or two you squeeze in about yourself.

As for the journal I keep, it is—as what is not?—a matter of mingled good and bad influences and results. I am so much alone that I find this pouring out of my thoughts and feelings a certain satisfaction; but unfortunately one's book is only a recipient, and not a commentary, and I miss the sifting, examining, scrutinizing, discussing intercourse that compels one to the analysis of one's own ideas and sentiments, and makes the society of any one with whom one communicates unreservedly so much more profitable, as well as pleasurable, than this everlasting self-communion. I miss my wholesome bitters, my daily dose of contradiction; and you need not be jealous of my book, for it is a miserable *pis aller* for our interminable talks.

I had a visit from J—— F—— the other day, and she stayed an hour, talking very pleasantly, and a little after your fashion; for she propounded the influence of matter over mind and the impossibility of preserving a sound and vigorous spirit in a weak and suffering body. I am blessed with such robust health that my moral shortcomings, however anxious I may

be to refer them to side-ache, tooth-ache, or any other ache, I am afraid deserve small mercy on the score of physical infirmity; but she, poor thing, I am sorry to say, suffers much and often from ill health, and complained, with evident experience, of the difficulty of preserving a cheerful spirit and an even temper in the dreary atmosphere of a sick-room.

When she was gone I set to work with "Francis I.," and corrected all the errors in the metre which Mr. Milman had had the kindness to point out to me. I then went over Beatrice with my mother, who takes infinite pains with me and seems to think I profit. She went to the play with Mrs. Fitzgerald and Mrs. Edward Romilly, who is a daughter of Mrs. Marcet, and, owing to A——'s detestation of that learned lady's elementary book on natural philosophy, I was very desirous they should not meet one another, though certainly, if any of Mrs. Marcet's works are dry and dull, it is not this charming daughter of hers.

But A—— was rabid against "Nat. Phil.," as she ignominiously nick-named Mrs. Marcet's work on natural philosophy, and so I brought her to the theatre with me; and she stayed in my dressing-room when I was there, and in my aunt Siddons's little box when I was acting, as you used to do; but she sang all the while she was with me, and though I made no sign, it gave me the nervous fidgets to such a degree that I almost forgot my part. In spite of which I acted better, for my mother said so; and there is some hope that by the time the play is withdrawn I shall not play Beatrice "like the chief mourner at a

funeral," which is what she benignly compares my performance of the part to.

The alteration in my gowns met with her entire approbation—I mean the taking away of the plaits from round the waist,—and my aunt Dall pronounced it an immense improvement and wished you could see it.

Lady Dacre and her daughter, Mrs. Sullivan, and Mr. James Wortley were in the orchestra, and came after the play to supper with us, as did Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Edward Romilly, and Mr. Harness: a very pleasant party, for the ladies are all clever and charming, and got on admirably together.

It is right, as you are a shareholder in that valuable property of ours, Covent Garden, that you should know that there was a very fine house, though I cannot exactly tell you the amount of the receipts.

I miss you dreadfully, my dear H——, and I do wish you could come back to us when Dorothy has left you; but I know that cannot be, and so I look forward to the summer time, the sunny time, the rosy time, when I shall be with you again at Ardgillan.

Yesterday, I read for the first time Joanna Baillie's "Count Basil." I am not sure that the love she describes does not affect me more even than Shakespeare's delineation of the passion in "Romeo and Juliet." There is a nerveless despondency about it that seems to me more intolerable than all the vivid palpitating anguish of the tragedy of Verona; it is like dying of slow poison, or malarial fever, compared with being shot or stabbed or even bleeding to death,

which is life pouring out from one, instead of drying up in one's brains. I think the lines beginning—

"I have seen the last look of her heavenly eyes,"

some of the most poignantly pathetic I know. I afterwards read over again Mr. Procter's play; it is extremely well written, but I am afraid it would not act as well as it reads. I believe I told you that "Iñez de Castro" was finally given up.

Sally and Lizzy Siddons came and sat with me for some time; they seem well and cheerful. Their mother, they said, was not very well; how should she be! though, indeed, regret would be selfish. Her son is gone to fulfil his own wishes in pursuing the career for which he was most fit; he will find in his uncle George Siddons's house in Calcutta almost a second home. Sally, whom you know I respect almost as much as love, said it was surprising how soon they had learnt to accept and become reconciled to their brother's departure. Besides all our self-invoked aids of reason and religion, nature's own provision for the need of our sorrows is more bountiful and beneficent than we always perceive or acknowledge. No one can go on living upon agony; we cannot grieve for ever if we would, and our most strenuous efforts of self-control derive help from the inevitable law of change, against which we sometimes murmur and struggle as if it wronged our consistency in sorrow and constancy in love. The tendency to *heal* is as universal as the liability to *smart*. You always speak of change with a sort of vague horror that surprises me. Though all things round us are for ever shifting and altering,

and though we ourselves vary and change, there is a supreme spirit of steadfastness in the midst of this huge unrest, and an abiding, unshaken, immovable principle of good guiding this vanishing world of fluctuating atoms, in whose eternal permanence of nature we largely participate, and our tendency towards and aspiration for whose perfect stability is one of the very causes of the progress, and therefore mutability, of our existence. Perhaps the most painful of all the forms in which change confronts us is in the increased infirmities and diminished graces which after long absence we observe in those we love; the failure of power and vitality in the outward frame, the lessened vividness of the intellect we have admired, strike us with a sharp surprise of distress, and it is startling to have revealed suddenly to us, in the condition of others, how rapidly, powerfully, and unobservedly time has been dealing with ourselves. But those who believe in eternity should be able to accept time, and the ruin of the altar from which the flame leaps up to heaven signifies little.

My father and I went to visit Macdonald's collection of sculpture to-day. I was very much pleased with some of the things; there are some good colossal figures, and an exquisite statue of a kneeling girl, that charmed me greatly; there are some excellent busts, too. How wonderfully that irrevocable substance assumes the soft, round forms of life! The colour in its passionless purity (absence of colour, I suppose I should say) is really harder than the substance itself of marble. I could not fall in love with a statue, as the poor girl in Procter's poem did with the Apollo

Belvidere, though I think I could with a fine portrait: how could one fall in love with what had no eyes! Was it not Thorwaldsen who said that the three materials in which sculptors worked—clay, plaster, and marble—were like life, death, and immortality? I thought my own bust (the one Macdonald executed in Edinburgh, you know) very good; the marble is beautiful, and I really think my friend did wonders with his impracticable subject; the shape of the head and shoulders is very pretty. I wonder what Sappho was like! An ugly woman, it is said; I do not know upon what authority, unless her own; but I wonder what kind of ugliness she enjoyed! Among other heads, we saw one of Brougham's mother, a venerable and striking countenance, very becoming the mother of the Chancellor of England. There was a bust, too, of poor Mr. Huskisson, taken after death. I heard a curious thing of him to-day: it seems that on the night before the opening of the railroad, as he was sitting with some friends, he said, "I cannot tell what ails me; I have a strange weight on my spirits; I am sure something dreadful will happen to-morrow; I wish it were over;" and that, when they recapitulated all the precautions, and all the means that had been taken for security, comfort, and pleasure, all he replied was, "I wish to God it were over!" There is something awful in these stories of presentiments that always impresses me deeply,—this warning shadow, projected by no perceptible object, falling darkly and chilly over one; this indistinct whisper of destiny, of which one hears the sound, without distinguishing the sense; this muffled tread of Fate approaching us!

Did you read Horace Twiss's speech on the Reform Bill? Every one seems to think it was excellent, whether they agree with his opinions and sentiments or not. I saw by the paper, to-day, that an earthquake had been felt along the coast near Dover. A—— says the world is coming to an end. We certainly live in strange times, but for that matter so has everybody that ever lived.

[In the admirable letter of Lord Macaulay to Mr. Ellis, describing the division of the house on the second reading of the Reform Bill, given in Mr. Trevelyan's life of his uncle, the great historian says Horace Twiss's countenance at the liberal victory looked like that of a "damned soul." If, instead of a lost soul, he had said poor Horace looked like a *lost seat*, he would have been more accurate, if not as picturesque. Mr. Twiss sat for one of Lord Clarendon's boroughs, and the passage of the Reform Bill was sure to dismiss him from Parliament; a serious thing in his future career, fortunes, and position.]

I must now tell you what I do next week, that you may know where to find me. Monday, the king goes to hear "Cinderella," and I have a holiday and go with my mother to a party at Dr. Granville's. Tuesday, I act Belvidera, and *afterwards* go to Lady Dacre's; I do this because, as I fixed the day myself for her party, not expecting to act that night, I cannot decently get off. Lady Macdonald's dinner party is put off; so until Saturday, when I play Beatrice, I shall spend my time in practising, reading, writing, (*not* arithmetic), walking, working cross-stitch, and similar young-ladyisms.

Good-bye, my dear H——. Give my love to Dorothy, if she will take it; if not, put it to your own share. I think this letter deserves a long answer. Mrs. Norton, Chantrey, and Barry Cornwall have come in while I have been finishing this letter; does not that sound pretty and pleasant? and don't you envy us some of our *privileges?* My mother has been seeing P——'s picture of my father in Macbeth this morning, and you never heard anything funnier than her rage at it: "A fat, red, round, staring, *pudsy* thing! the eyes no more like his than mine are!" (certainly, no human eyes could be more dissimilar); "and then, his jaw!—bless my soul, how could he miss it! the Kemble jawbone! Why, it was as notorious as Samson's!" Good-bye. Your affectionate

FANNY.

Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, the famous friends of Llangollen, kept during the whole life they spent together under such peculiar circumstances a daily diary, so minute as to include the mention not only of every one they saw (and it must be remembered that their hermitage was a place of fashionable pilgrimage, as well as a hospitable refuge), but also *what they had for dinner every day*,—so I have been told.

The little box on the stage I have alluded to in this letter as Mrs. Siddons's was a small recess opposite the prompter's box, and of much the same proportions, that my father had fitted up for the especial convenience of my aunt Siddons whenever she chose to honour my performances with her presence. She

came to it several times, but the draughts in crossing the stage were bad, and the exertion and excitement too much for her, and her life was not prolonged much after my coming upon the stage.

Lord and Lady Dacre were among my kindest friends. With Lady Dacre I corresponded from the beginning of our acquaintance until her death, which took place at a very advanced age. She was strikingly handsome, with a magnificent figure and great vivacity and charm of manner and conversation. Her accomplishments were various, and all of so masterly an excellence that her performances would have borne cemparison with the best works of professional artists. She drew admirably, especially animals, of which she was extremely fond. I have seen drawings of groups of cattle by her that, without the advantage of colour, recall the life and spirit of Rosa Bonheur's pictures. She was a perfect Italian scholar, having studied enthusiastically that divine tongue with the enthusiast Ugo Foscolo, whose patriotic exile and misfortunes were cheered and soothed by the admiring friendship and cordial kindness of Lord and Lady Dacre. Among all the specimens of translation with which I am acquainted, her English version of Petrarch's sonnets is one of the most remarkable for fidelity, beauty, and the grace and sweetness with which she has achieved the difficult feat of following in English the precise form of the complicated and peculiar Italian prosody. These translations seem to me as nearly perfect as that species of literature can be. But the most striking demonstrations of her genius were the groups of

horses which Lady Dacre modelled from nature, and which, copied and multiplied in plaster casts, have been long familiar to the public, without many of those who know and admire them being aware who was their author. It is hardly possible to see anything more graceful and spirited, truer at once to nature and the finest art, than these compositions, faithful in the minutest details of execution, and highly poetical in their entire conception. Lady Dacre was the finest female rider and driver in England; that is saying, in the world. Had she lived in Italy in the sixteenth century her name would be among the noted names of that great artistic era; but as she was an Englishwoman of the nineteenth, in spite of her intellectual culture and accomplishments she was *only* an exceedingly clever, amiable, kind lady of fashionable London society.

Of Lord Dacre it is not easy to speak with all the praise which he deserved. He inherited his title from his mother, who had married Mr. Brand of the Hoo, Hertfordshire, and at the moment of his becoming heir to that estate was on the point of leaving England with Colonel Talbot, son of Lord Talbot de Malahide, to found with him a colony in British Canada, where Arcadia was to revive again, at a distance from all the depraved and degraded social systems of Europe, under the auspices of these two enthusiastic young reformers. Mr. Brand had completed his studies in Germany, and acquired, by assiduous reading and intimate personal acquaintance with the most enlightened and profound thinkers of the philosophical school of which Kant was the

apostle, a mental cultivation very unlike, in its depth and direction, the usual intellectual culture of young Englishmen of his class.

He was an enthusiast of the most generous description, in love with liberty and ardent for progress; the political as well as the social and intellectual systems of Europe appeared to him, in his youthful zeal for the improvement of his fellow-beings, belated if not benighted on the road to it, and he had embraced with the most ardent hopes and purposes the scheme of emigration of Colonel Talbot, for forming in the New World a colony where all the errors of the Old were to be avoided. But his mother died, and the young emigrant withdrew his foot from the deck of the Canadian ship to take his place in the British peerage, to bear an ancient English title and become master of an old English estate, to marry a brilliant woman of English fashionable society, and be thenceforth the ideal of an English country gentleman, that most enviable of mortals, as far as outward circumstance and position can make a man so.

His serious early German studies had elevated and enlarged his mind far beyond the usual level and scope of the English country gentleman's brain, and freed him from the peculiarly narrow class prejudices which it harbours. He was an enlightened liberal, not only in politics but in every domain of human thought; he was a great reader, with a wide range of foreign as well as English literary knowledge. He had exquisite taste, was a fine connoisseur and critic in matters of art, and was the kindliest natured and mannered man alive.

At his house in Hertfordshire, the Hoo, I used to meet Earl Grey; his son, the present earl (then Lord Howick); Lord Melbourne; the Duke of Bedford; Earl Russell (then Lord John), and Sidney and Bobus Smith,—all of them distinguished men, but few of them, I think, Lord Dacre's superiors in mental power. Altogether the society that he and Lady Dacre gathered round them was as delightful as it was intellectually remarkable; it was composed of persons eminent for ability, and influential members of a great world in which extraordinary capacity was never an excuse for want of urbanity or the absence of the desire to please; their intercourse was charming as well as profoundly interesting to me.

During a conversation I once had with Lady Dacre about her husband, she gave me the following extract from the writings of Madame Huber, the celebrated Therëse Heyne, whose first husband, Johann Georg Forster, was one of the delegates which sympathizing Mentz sent to Paris in 1793, to solicit from the revolutionary government the favour of annexation to the French republic.

"In the year 1790 Forster had attached to himself and introduced in his establishment a young Englishman, who came to Germany with the view of studying the German philosophy [Kant's system] in its original language. He was nearly connected with some of the leaders of the then opposition. He was so noble, so simple, that each virtue seemed in him an instinct, and so stoical in his views that he considered every noble action as the victory of self-control, and never felt himself good enough. The friends [Huber and

Forster] who loved him with parental tenderness sometimes repeated with reference to him the words of Shakespeare—

'So wise, so young, they say, do ne'er live long.'

But, thanks to fate, he has falsified that prophecy; the youth is grown into manhood; he lives, unclaimed by any mere political party, with the more valuable portion of his people, and satisfies himself with being a good man so long as circumstances prevent him from acting in his sense as a good citizen. Our daily intercourse with this youth enabled us to combine a knowledge of English events with our participation in the proceedings on the Continent. His patriotism moderated many of our extreme views with regard to his country; his estimate of many individuals, of whom from his position he possessed accurate knowledge, decided many a disputed point amongst us; and the tenderness which we all felt for this beloved and valued friend tended to produce justice and moderation in all our conflicts of opinion." *

Lady Dacre had had by her first marriage, to Mr. Wilmot, an only child, the Mrs. Sullivan I have mentioned in this letter, wife of the Reverend Frederick Sullivan, Vicar of Kimpton. She was an excellent and most agreeable person, who inherited her mother's literary and artistic genius in a remarkable degree, though her different position and less leisurely circumstances as wife of a country clergyman and mother of a large family, devoted to the important duties of both callings, probably prevented the full

* Sketch of Lord Dacre's character by Madame Huber.

development and manifestation of her fine intellectual gifts. She was a singularly modest and diffident person, and this as well as her more serious avocations may have stood in the way of her doing justice to her uncommon abilities, of which, however, there is abundant evidence in her drawings and groups of modelled figures, and in the five volumes of charming stories called "Tales of a Chaperon," and "Tales of the Peerage and the Peasantry," which were not published with her name but simply as edited by Lady Dacre, to whom their authorship was, I think, generally attributed. The mental gifts of Lady Dacre appear to be heirlooms, for they have been inherited for three generations, and in each case by her female descendants.

The gentleman who accompanied her to our house, on the evening I referred to in my letter, was the Honourable James Stuart Wortley, youngest son of the Earl of Wharncliffe, who was prevented by failure of health alone from reaching the very highest honours of the legal profession, in which he had already attained the rank of solicitor-general, when his career was prematurely closed by disastrous illness. At the time of my first acquaintance with him he was a very clever and attractive young man, and though intended for a future Lord Chancellor he condescended to sing sentimental songs very charmingly.

Of my excellent and amiable friend, the Reverend William Harness, a biography has been published which tells all there is to be told of his uneventful life and career. Endowed with a handsome face and sweet countenance and very fine voice, he was at one

time a fashionable London preacher, a vocation not incompatible, when he exercised it, with a great admiration for the drama. He was an enthusiastic frequenter of the theatre, published a valuable edition of Shakespeare, and wrote two plays in blank verse which had considerable merit; but his pre-eminent gift was goodness, in which I have known few people who surpassed him. Objecting from conscientious motives to hold more than one living, he received from his friend, Lord Lansdowne, an appointment in the Home Office, the duties of which did not interfere with those of his clerical profession. He was of a delightfully sunny, cheerful temper, and very fond of society, mixing in the best that London afforded, and frequently receiving with cordial hospitality some of its most distinguished members in his small, modest residence. He was a devoted friend of my family, had an ardent admiration for my aunt Siddons, and honoured me with a kind and constant regard.

Miss Joanna Baillie was a great friend of Mrs. Siddons's, and wrote expressly for her the part of Jane de Montfort, in her play of "De Montfort." My father and mother had the honour of her acquaintance, and I went more than once to pay my respects to her at the cottage in Hampstead where she passed the last years of her life.

The peculiar plan upon which she wrote her fine plays, making each of them illustrate a single passion, was in great measure the cause of their unfitness for the stage. "De Montfort," which has always been considered the most dramatic of them, had only a very partial success, in spite of its very great poetical

merit and considerable power of passion, and the favourable circumstance that the two principal characters in it were represented by the eminent actors for whom the authoress originally designed them. In fact, though Joanna Baillie selected and preferred the dramatic form for her poetical compositions, they are wanting in the real dramatic element, resemblance to life and human nature, and are infinitely finer as poems than plays.

But the desire and ambition of her life had been to write for the stage, and the reputation she achieved as a poet did not reconcile her to her failure as a dramatist. I remember old Mr. Sotheby, the poet (I add this title to his name, though his title to it was by some esteemed but slender), telling me of a visit he had once paid her, when, calling him into her little kitchen (she was not rich, kept few servants, and did not disdain sometimes to make her own pies and puddings), she bade him, as she was up to the elbows in flour and paste, draw from her pocket a paper; it was a play-bill, sent to her by some friend in the country, setting forth that some obscure provincial company was about to perform Miss Joanna Baillie's celebrated tragedy of "De Montfort." "There," exclaimed the culinary Melpomene, "there, Sotheby, I am so happy! You see my plays can be acted somewhere!" Well, too, do I remember the tone of half-regretful congratulation in which she said to me, "Oh, you lucky girl—you lucky girl; you are going to have your play acted!" This was "Francis I.," the production of which on the stage was a bitter annoyance to me, to prevent which I would have given

anything I possessed, but which made me (vexed and unhappy though I was at the circumstance on which I was being congratulated) an object of positive envy to the distinguished authoress and kind old lady.

In order to steer clear of the passion of revenge, which is in fact hatred proceeding from a sense of injury, Miss Joanna Baillie in her fine tragedy of "De Montfort" has inevitably made the subject of it an *antipathy*, that is, an instinctive, unreasoning, partly physical antagonism, producing abhorrence and detestation the most intense, without any adequate motive; and the secret of the failure of her noble play on the stage is precisely that this is not (fortunately) a natural passion common to the majority of human beings (which hatred that *has* a motive undoubtedly is, in a greater or less degree), but an abnormal element in exceptionally morbid natures, and therefore a sentiment (or sensation) with which no great number of people or large proportion of a public audience can sympathize or even understand. Intense and causeless hatred is one of the commonest indications of insanity, and, alas! one that too often exhibits itself towards those who have been objects of the tenderest love; but De Montfort is not insane, and his loathing is unaccountable to healthy minds upon any other plea, and can find no comprehension in audiences quite prepared to understand, if not to sympathize with, the vindictive malignity of Shylock and the savage ferocity of Zanga. Goethe, in his grand play of "Tasso," gives the poet this morbid detestation of the accomplished courtier and man of the world, Antonio; but then, Tasso is represented as on

the very verge of that madness into the dark abyss of which he subsequently sinks.

Shakespeare's treatment of the passion of hatred, in "The Merchant of Venice," is worthy of all admiration for the profound insight with which he has discriminated between that form of it which all men comprehend, and can sympathize with, and that which, being really nothing but diseased idiosyncrasy, appears to the majority of healthy minds a mere form of madness.

In his first introduction to us the Jew accounts for his detestation of Antonio upon three very comprehensible grounds: national race hatred, in feeling and exciting which the Jews have been quite a "peculiar people" from the earliest records of history; personal injury in the defeat of his usurious prospects of gain; and personal insult in the unmanly treatment to which Antonio had subjected him. However excessive in degree, his hatred is undoubtedly shown to have a perfectly comprehensible, if not adequate cause and nature, and is a *reasonable* hatred, except from such a moral point of view as allows of none.

An audience can therefore tolerate him with mitigated disgust through the opening portions of the play. When, however, in the grand climax of the trial scene Shakespeare intends that he shall be no longer tolerated or tolerable, but condemned alike by his Venetian judges and his English audience, he carefully avoids putting into his mouth any one of the reasons with which in the opening of the play he explains and justifies his hatred. He does not make him quote the centuries-old Hebrew scorn of and aversion to the

Gentiles, nor the merchant's interference with his commercial speculations, nor the man's unprovoked spitting at, spurning, and abuse of him; but he will and *can* give *no* reason for his abhorrence of Antonio, whom he says he *loathes* with the inexplicable revulsion of nature that certain men feel towards certain animals; and the mastery of the poet shows itself in thus making Shylock's cruelty monstrous, and accounting for it as an abnormal monstrosity.

Hatred that has a reasonable cause may cease with its removal. Supposing Antonio to have become a converted Jew, or to have withdrawn all opposition to Shylock's usury and compensated him largely for the losses he had caused him by it, and to have expressed publicly, with the utmost humility, contrition for his former insults and sincere promises of future honour, respect, and reverence, it is possible to imagine Shylock relenting in a hatred of which the reasons he assigned for it no longer existed. But from the moment he says he has *no* reason for his hatred other than the insuperable disgust and innate enmity of an antagonistic nature,—the deadly, sickening, physical loathing that in rare instances affects certain human beings towards others of their species, and towards certain animals,—then there are no calculable bounds to the ferocity of such a blind instinct, no possibility of mitigating, by considerations of reflection or feeling, an inherent, integral element of a morbid organization. And Shakespeare, in giving this aspect to the last exhibition of Shylock's vindictiveness, cancels the original appeal to possible sympathy for his previous wrongs, and presents him as a dangerous maniac or

wild beast, from whose fury no one is safe, and whom it is every one's interest to strike down; so that at the miserable Jew's final defeat the whole audience gasps with a sense of unspeakable relief. Perhaps, too, the master meant to show—at any rate he has shown—that the deadly sin of hatred, indulged even with a cause, ends in the dire disease of causeless hate and the rabid frenzy of a maniac.

It has sometimes been objected to this wonderful scene that Portia's reticence and delay in relieving Antonio and her husband from their suspense is unnatural. But Portia is a very *superior woman*, able to control not only her own palpitating sympathy with their anguish, but her impatient yearning to put an end to it, till she has made every effort to redeem the wretch whose hardness of heart fills her with incredulous amazement,—a heavenly instinct akin to the divine love that desires not that a sinner should perish, which enables her to postpone her own relief and that of those precious to her till she has exhausted endeavour to soften Shylock; and Shakespeare thus not only justifies the stern severity of her ultimate sentence on him, but shows her endowed with the highest powers of self-command, and patient, long-suffering with evil; her teasing her husband half to death afterward restores the balance of her humanity, which was sinking heavily towards perfection.

Bryan Waller Procter, dear Barry Cornwall—beloved by all who knew him, even his fellow-poets, for his sweet, gentle disposition—had married (as I have said elsewhere) Anne Skepper, the daughter of our friend, Mrs. Basil Montague. They were among

our most intimate and friendly acquaintance. Their house was the resort of all the choice spirits of the London society of their day, her pungent epigrams and brilliant sallies making the most delightful contrast imaginable to the cordial kindness of his conversation and the affectionate tenderness of his manner; she was like a fresh lemon,—golden, fragrant, firm, and wholesome,—and he was like the honey of Hymettus; they were an incomparable compound.

The play which I spoke of as his, in my last letter, was Ford's "White Devil," of which the notorious Vittoria Corrombona, Duchess of Bracciano, is the heroine. The powerful but coarse treatment of the Italian story by the Elizabethan playwright has been chastened into something more adapted to modern taste by Barry Cornwall; but, even with his kindred power and skilful handling, the work of the early master retained too rough a flavour for the public palate of our day, and very reluctantly the project of bringing it out was abandoned.

The tragical story of Vittoria Corrombona, eminently tragical in that age of dramatic lives and deaths, has furnished not only the subject of this fine play of Ford's, but that of a magnificent historical novel, by the great German writer, Tieck, in which it is difficult to say which predominates, the intense interest of the heroine's individual career, or that created by the splendid delineation of the whole state of Italy at that period—the days of the grand old Sixtus the Fifth in Rome, and of the contemporary Medici in Florence; it is altogether a masterpiece by a great master. Superior in tragic horror, because unrelieved by the

general picture of contemporaneous events, but quite inferior as a work of imagination, is the comparatively short sketch of Vittoria Corrombona's life and death contained in a collection of Italian stories called "Crimes Célèbres," by Stendahl, where it keeps company with other tragedies of private life, which during the same century occupied with their atrocious details the tribunals of justice in Rome. Among the collection is the story from which Mr. Fechter's melodrama of "Bel Demonio" was taken, the story of the Cenci, and the story of a certain Duchess of Pagliano, all of them inconceivably horrible and revolting.

About the same time that this play of Barry Cornwall's was given up, a long negotiation between Miss Mitford and the management of Covent Garden came to a conclusion by her withdrawal of her play of "Iñez de Castro," a tragedy founded upon one of the most romantic and picturesque incidents in the Spanish chronicle. After much uncertainty and many difficulties, the project of bringing it out was abandoned. I remember thinking I could do nothing with the part of the heroine, whose corpse is produced in the last act, seated on the throne and receiving the homage of the subjects of her husband, Pedro the Cruel—a very ghastly incident in the story, which I think would in itself have endangered the success of the play. My despondency about the part of Iñez had nothing to do with the possible effect of this situation, however, but was my invariable impression with regard to every new part that was assigned to me on first reading it. But I am sure Miss Mitford had no cause to regret

that I had not undertaken this; the success of her play in my hands ran a risk such as her fine play of "Rienzi," in those of Mr. Young or Mr. Macready, could never have incurred; and it was well for her that to their delineation of her Roman tribune, and not mine of her Aragonese lady, her reputation with the public as a dramatic writer was confided.

I have mentioned in this last letter a morning visit from Chantrey, the eminent sculptor, who was among our frequenters. His appearance and manners were simple and almost rustic, and he was shy and silent in society, all which may have been results of his obscure birth and early want of education. It was to Sir Francis Chantrey that my father's friends applied for the design of the beautiful silver vase which they presented to him at the end of his professional career. The sculptor's idea seemed to me a very happy and appropriate one, and the design was admirably executed; it consisted of a simple and elegant figure of Hamlet on the cover of the vase, and round it, in fine relief, the "Seven Ages of Man," from Jacques's speech in "As You Like It;" the whole work was very beautiful, and has a double interest for me, as that not only of an eminent artist, but a kind friend of my father's.

Great Russell Street, March 7, 1831.

My dearest H——,

With regard to change as we contemplate it when parting from those we love, I confess I should shrink from the idea of years intervening before you and I met again; not that I apprehend any diminution

of our affection, but it would be painful to be no longer young, or to have grown *suddenly* old to each other. But I hope this will not be so; I hope we may go on meeting often enough for that change which is inevitable to be long imperceptible; I hope we may be allowed to go on *wondering* together, till we meet where you will certainly be happy, if wonder is for once joined to *knowledge*. I remember my aunt Whitelock saying that when she went to America she left my father a toddling thing that she used to dandle and carry about; and the first time she saw him after her return, he had a baby of his own in his arms. That sort of thing makes one's heart jump into one's mouth with dismay; it seems as if all the time one had been *living away*, unconsciously, was thrown in a lump at one's head.

J—— F—— told me on Thursday that her sister, whose wedding-day seemed to be about yesterday, was the mother of four children; she has lost no time, it is true, but my "yesterday" must be five years old. After dinner, yesterday, I wrote a new last scene to "Francis I." I mean to send it to Murray.

A—— says you seem younger to her than I do; which, considering your fourteen years' seniority over me, is curious; but the truth is, though she does not know it, I am still *too young;* I have not lived, experienced, and suffered enough to have acquired the self-forgetfulness and gentle forbearance that make us good and pleasant companions to our *youngers*.

Henry and I are going together to the Zoological Gardens one of these days; that lovely tigress hangs

about my heart, and I must go and see her again. Ever your affectionate

F. A. KEMBLE.

Great Russell Street, March 9, 1831.

MY DEAR H——,

Why are you not here to kiss and congratulate me? I am so proud and happy! Mr. Murray has given me four hundred and fifty pounds for my play alone! the other things he does not wish to publish with it. Only think of it—was there ever such publishing munificence! My father has the face to say *it is not enough!* but looks so proud and pleased that his face alone shows it is *too much* by a great deal; my mother is enchanted, and I am so happy, so thankful for this prosperous result of my work, so delighted at earning so much, so surprised and charmed to think that what gave me nothing but pleasure in the doing has brought me such an after-harvest of profit; it is too good almost to be true, and yet it is true.

But I am happy and have been much excited from another reason to-day. Richard Trench, John's dear friend and companion, is just returned from Spain, and came here this morning to see us. I sat with him a long while. John is well and in good spirits. Mr. Trench before leaving Gibraltar had used every persuasion to induce my brother to return with him, and had even got him on board the vessel in which they were to sail, but John's heart failed him at the thought of forsaking Torrijos, and he went back. The account Mr. Trench gives of their

proceedings is much as I imagined them to have been. They hired a house which they denominated Constitution Hall, where they passed their time smoking and drinking ale, John holding forth upon German metaphysics, which grew dense in proportion as the tobacco fumes grew thick and his glass grew empty. You know we had an alarm about their being taken prisoners, which story originated thus: they had agreed with the constitutionalists in Algeciras that on a certain day the latter were to *get rid* of their officers (murder them civilly, I suppose), and then light beacons on the heights, at which signal Torrijos and his companions, among them our party who were lying armed on board a schooner in the bay, were to make good their landing. The English authorities at Gibraltar, however, had note of this, and whilst they lay watching for the signal they were boarded by one of the Government ships and taken prisoners. The number of English soldiers in whose custody they found themselves being, however, inferior to their own, they agreed that if the beacons made their appearance they would turn upon their guards and either imprison or kill them. But the beacons were never lighted; their Spanish fellow-revolutionists broke faith with them, and they remained ingloriously on board until next day, when they were ignominiously suffered to go quietly on shore again.

CHAPTER X.

Great Russell Street, March 8, 1831.

I AM going to be very busy signing my name; my benefit is fixed for the 21st; I do not yet know what the play is to be. Our young, unsuccessful playwright, Mr. Wade, whom I like very much (he took his damnation as bravely as Capaneo), and Macdonald, the sculptor, dined with us on Sunday. On Monday I went to the library of the British Museum to consult Du Bellay's history for my new version of the last scene of "Francis I." I looked at some delightful books, and among others, a very old and fine MS. of the "Roman de la Rose," beautifully illuminated; also all the armorial bearings, shields, banners, etc., of the barons of King John's time, the barons of Runnymede and the Charter, most exquisitely and minutely copied from monuments, stained glass, brass effigies, etc.; it was a fine work, beautifully executed for the late king, George IV. I wish it had been executed for me. I did get A—— to walk in the square with me once, but she likes it even less than I do; my intellectual conversation is no equivalent for the shop-windows of Regent Street and the counters of the bazaar, and she has gone out with my aunt every day since, "leaving the square to

solitude and me;" so I take my book with me (I can read walking at my quickest pace), and like to do so.

Tuesday evening I played Belvidera. I was quite nervous at acting it again after so long a period. After the play my father and I went to Lady Dacre's and had a pleasant party enough. Mrs. Norton was there, more entertaining and blinding beautiful than ever. Henry desired me to give her his "desperate love," to which she replied by sending the poor youth her "deadly scorn." Lord Melbourne desired to be introduced to me, and I think if he likes, he shall be the decrepit old nobleman you are so afraid of me marrying. I was charmed with his face, voice, and manner; we dine with him next Wednesday week, and I will write you word if the impression deepens.

My dear H——, only imagine my dismay; my father told me that after Easter I should have to play Lady Macbeth! It is no use thinking about it, for that only frightens me more; but, looking at it as calmly and reasonably as possible, surely it is too great an undertaking for so young a person as myself. Perhaps I may play it better than most girls of my age would; what will that amount to? That towering, tremendous woman, what a trial of courage and composure for me! If you were a good friend, now, you would come up to town "for that occasion only," and sustain me with your presence.

The beautiful Miss Bayley is at length married to William Ashley [the present Earl of Shaftesbury], and everybody is rejoicing with them or for them; it is pleasant to catch glimpses of fresh shade and flowers as one goes along the dusty high-road of life.

I must now tell you what I am going to do, that you may know where to find me: to-morrow, I go to a private morning concert with my mother; in the evening, I act Beatrice, and after the play all sorts of people are coming here to supper. On Monday, I act Fazio; Wednesday, we dine at Lady Macdonald's; Thursday, I act Mrs. Haller; and Saturday, Beatrice again. I have not an idea what will be done for my benefit; we are all devising and proposing. I myself want them to bring out Massinger's "Maid of Honour;" I think it beautiful.

Now, dear H——, I must leave off, and sign my tickets. We all send our loves to you: my mother tells me not to let you forget her; she says she is afraid you class her with Mrs. John Kemble. If ever there were two dissimilar human beings, it is those two. Ever your affectionate

FANNY.

Great Russell Street, March 13, 1831.

DEAR H——,

I received your letter yesterday, and must exult in my self-command, for Mrs. Jameson was with me, and I did not touch it till she was gone. Thank you first of all for Spenser; that *is* poetry! I was much benefited as well as delighted by it. Considering the power of poetry to raise one's mind and soul into the noblest moods, I do not think it is held in sufficient reverence nowadays; the bards of old were greater people in their society than our modern ones are; to be sure, modern poetry is not all of a purely elevating character, and poets are *paid*, besides being

asked out to dinner, which the bards always were. I think the tone of a good deal of Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope" very noble, and some of Mrs. Hemans's things are very beautiful in sentiment as well as expression. But then, all that order of writing is so feeble compared with the poetry of our old masters, who do not so much appeal to our feelings as to our reason and imagination combined. I do not believe that to be sublime is in the power of a woman, any more than to be logical; and Mrs. Hemans, who is neither, writes charmingly, and one loves her as a Christian woman even more than one admires her as a writer.

Yes, it is very charming that the dove, the favourite type of gentleness and tenderness and "harmlessness," should have such a swift and vigorous power of flight; *suaviter—fortiter*, a good combination.

We are having the most tempestuous weather; A—— is horribly frightened, and I am rather awed. I got the encyclopædia to-night to study the cause of the equinoctial gales, which I thought we should both be the better for knowing, but could find nothing about them; can you tell me of any book or treatise upon this subject?

My dear H——, shut your eyes while you read this, because if you don't, they'll never shut again. Constance is what I am to play for my benefit. I am horribly frightened; it is a cruel weight to lay upon my shoulders: however, there is nothing for it but doing my best, and leaving the rest to fate. I almost think *now* I could do Lady Macbeth better. I am like poor little Arthur, who begged to have his tongue cut *off* rather than have his eyes put out; that last scene

of Constance,—think what an actress one should be to do it justice! Pray for me.

And so the Poles are crushed! what a piteous horror! Will there never come a day of retribution for this!

Mrs. Jameson came and sat with me some time yesterday evening, and read me a good deal of her work on Shakespeare's female characters; they are very pleasing sketches,—outlines,—but her criticism and analysis are rather graceful than profound or powerful. Tuesday next my mother and I spend the evening with her; Wednesday, we dine at Sir John Macdonald's; Thursday, I act Mrs. Haller; Friday, we have an evening party at home; Saturday, I play Beatrice; Monday, Constance (come up for it!); Tuesday, we dine with Lord Melbourne; and this is as much of the book of fate as is unrolled to me at present.

Mrs. Harry came here to-day; it is the first time I have seen her this month; she is looking wretchedly, and talks of returning to Edinburgh. My first feeling at hearing this was joy that I shall not go there and find the face and voice for ever associated with Edinburgh in my heart away from it. But I am not *really* glad, for it is the failure of some plan of hers which obliges her to do this. I have the loves of all to give you, and they are all very troublesome, crying, "Give mine separately," "Don't lump mine;" so please take them each separately and singly. I have been sobbing my heart out over Constance this morning, and act Fazio to-night, which is hard work.

Your affectionate

F.

Great Russell Street, Saturday, March 19th.

DEAR H——,

You ask if Mr. Trench's account of their Spanish escapade is likely to soften my father's view of the folly of the expedition. I think not, by any means,—as how should it? But the yesterday papers reported a successful attack upon Cadiz and the proclamation of Torrijos general-in-chief by the Constitutionalists, who were rising all over the country. This has been again contradicted to-day, and may have been a mere stock-jobbing story, after all. If it be true, however, the results may be of serious importance to my brother. Should the Constitutionalists get the upper hand, his adherence to Torrijos may place him in a prominent position, I am afraid; perhaps, however, though success may not alter my father's opinion of the original folly of John's undertaking, it may in some measure reconcile him to it. I suppose it is not impossible now that John should become an officer in the Spanish army, and that after so many various and contradictory plans his career may finally be that of a soldier. How strange and sad it all seems to me, to be sure!

You say it's a horrid thing one can't "try on one's body" and choose such a one as would suit one; but do you consider your body accidental, as it were, or do you really think we could do better for ourselves than has been done for us in this matter? After all, our souls get used to our bodies, and in some fashion alter and shape them to fit; then you know if we had different bodies we should be different people and not our *same selves* at all; if I had been tall, as I confess

I in my heart of hearts wish I were, what another moral creature should I have been.

You urge me to work, dear H——, and study my profession, and were I to say I hate it, you would retort, "You do it, therefore take pains to do it well." And so I do, as well as I can; I have been studying Constance with my father, and rubbed off some of the rough edges of it a little.

I am sorry to say I shall not have a good benefit; unluckily, the second reading of the Reform Bill comes on to-morrow (to-night, by-the-by, for it is Monday), and there will be as many people in the House of Commons as in *my* house, and many more in Parliament Street than in either; it is unfortunate for me, but cannot be helped. I was going to say, pray for me, but I forgot that you will not get this till "it is bedtime, Hal, and all is well." The publication of my play is not to take place till after this Reform fever has a little abated.

Dear H——, this is Wednesday, the 23rd; Monday and King John and my Constance are all over; but I am at this moment still so *deaf with nervousness* as not to hear the ticking of my watch when held to one of my ears; the other side of my head is not deaf any longer *now;* but on Monday night I hardly heard one word I uttered through the whole play. It is rather hard that having endeavoured (and succeeded wonderfully, too) in possessing my soul in peace during that trial of my courage, my nervous system should give way in this fashion. I had a knife of pain sticking in my side all through the play and all day long, Monday; as I did not hear myself speak, I

cannot tell you anything of my performance. My dress was of the finest pale-blue merino, all folds and drapery like my Grecian Daughter costume, with an immense crimson mantle hung on my shoulders which I could hardly carry. My head-dress was exactly copied from one of my aunt's, and you cannot imagine how curiously like her I looked. My mother says, "You have done it better than I believe any other girl of your age would do it." But of course that is not a representation of Constance to satisfy her, or any one else, indeed. You know, dear H——, what my own feeling has been about this, and how utterly incapable I knew myself for such an undertaking; but you did not, nor could any one, know how dreadfully I suffered from the apprehension of failure which my reason told me was well founded. I assure you that when I came on the stage I felt like some hunted creature driven to bay; I was really half wild with terror. The play went off admirably, but I lay, when my part was over, for an hour on my dressing-room floor, with only strength enough left to cry. Your letter to A—— revived me, and just brought me enough to life again to eat my supper, which I had not felt able to touch, in spite of my exhaustion and great need of it; when, however, I once began, my appetite justified the French proverb and took the turn of voracity, and I devoured like a Homeric hero. I promised to tell you something of our late dinner at Lord Melbourne's, but have left myself neither space nor time. It was very pleasant, and I fell out of my love for our host (who, moreover, is absorbed by Mrs. Norton) and into another love with Lord O——, Lord T——'s son, who

is one of the most beautiful creatures of the male sex I ever saw; unluckily, he does not fulfil the necessary conditions of your theory, and is neither as old nor as decrepit as you have settled the nobleman I am to marry is to be; so he won't do.

We are going to a party at Devonshire House to-night. Here I am called away to receive some visitors. Pray write soon to your affectionate

FANNY.

To-morrow I act Constance, and Saturday Isabella, which is all I know for the present of the future. I have just bought A—— a beautiful guitar; I promised her one as soon as my play was out. My room is delicious with violets, and my new blue velvet gown heavenly in colour and all other respects except the—well, *un*heavenly price Dévy makes me pay for it.

Great Russell Street, April 2, 1831.

DEAR H——,

I am truly sorry for M——'s illness, just at the height of all her gay season gaieties, too; it is too provoking to have one's tackle out of order and lie on the beach with such a summer sea sparkling before one. I congratulate L—— on her father's relenting and cancelling his edict against waltzing and galloping. And yet, I am always *rather* sorry when a determination of that sort, firmly expressed, is departed from. Of course our views and opinions, not being infallible, are liable to change, and may not unreasonably be altered or weakened by circumstances and the more enlightened convictions of improved powers and enlarged experience, but it is as well, therefore, for

our own sakes, not to promulgate them as if they were Persian decrees. One can step gracefully down from a lesser height, where one would fall from a greater. But with young people generally, I think, to retreat from a position you have assumed is to run the risk of losing some of their consideration and respect; for they have neither consciousness of their own frailty, nor charity for the frailty of others, nor the wisdom to perceive that a resolution may be better broken than kept; and though perhaps themselves gaining some desired end by the yielding of their elders, I believe any indulgence so granted (that is, after being emphatically denied) never fails to leave on the youthful mind an impression of want of judgment or determination in those they have to do with.

We dine with the Fitzhughs on Tuesday week; I like Emily much, though she will talk of human souls as "vile;" I gave her Channing to read, and she liked it very much, but said that his view of man's nature was not that of a Christian; I think her contempt for it still less such. As we are immortal in spite of death, so I think we are wonderful in spite of our weakness, and admirable in spite of our imperfection, and capable of all good in spite of all our evil.

A——'s guitar is a beauty, and wears a broad blue scarf and has a sweet, low, soft voice. Mr. Pickersgill is going to paint my portrait; it is a present Major Dawkins makes my father and mother, but I do wish they would leave off trying to take my picture. My face is too bad for anything but nature, and never was intended for *still* life. The intention, however, is very kind, and the offer one that can scarcely be

refused. I wish you would come and keep me awake through my sittings.

Our engagements—social and professional—are a dinner party at the Mayows to-morrow; an evening party on Monday; Tuesday, the opera; Wednesday I act Isabella; Thursday, a dinner at Mr. Harness's; Friday I act Bianca; Saturday we have a dinner party at home; the Monday following I act Constance; Tuesday there is a dance at the Fitzhughs'; and sundry dissipations looming in the horizon.

Good-bye, and God bless you, my dear H——. I look forward to our meeting at Ardgillan, three months hence, with delight, and am affectionately yours,

F. A. K.

A—— and I begin our riding lessons on Wednesday next. We have got pretty dark-brown habits and red velvet waistcoats, and shall look like two nice little robin-redbreasts on horseback; all I dread is that she may be frightened to death, which might militate against her enjoyment, perhaps.

What you say about my brother John is very true; and though my first care is for his life, my next is for his happiness, which I believe more likely to be secured by his remaining in the midst of action and excitement abroad, than in any steady pursuit at home. My benefit was not as good as it ought to have been; it was not sufficiently advertised, and it took place on the night of the reading of the Reform Bill, which circumstance was exceedingly injurious to it.

To-day is John's birthday. I was in hopes it might

not occur to my mother, but she alluded to it yesterday. I was looking at that little sketch of him in her room this morning, with a heavy heart. His lot seems now cast indeed, and most strangely. I would give anything to see him and hear his voice again, but I fear to wish him back again amongst us. I am afraid that he would neither be happy himself, nor make others so.

Great Russell Street, 1831.

It is a long time, dear H——, since I have written to you, and I feel it so with self-reproach. To-day, except paying a round of visits with my mother and acting this evening, I have nothing to prevent my talking with you in tolerable peace and quiet,—so here I am. You have no idea what a quantity of "things to be done" has been crowded into the last fortnight: studying Camiola, rehearsing for two hours and a half every other day, riding for two hours at a time, and sitting for my picture nearly as long, running from place to place about my dresses, and now having Lady Teazle and Mrs. Oakley to *get up*, immediately,—all this, with my nightly work or nightly gaieties, makes an amount of occupation of one sort and another that hardly leaves me time for thought.

You will be glad to hear that "The Maid of Honour" was entirely successful; that it will have a "great run," or bring much money to the theatre, I doubt. It is a *cold* play, according to the present taste of audiences, and there are undoubted defects in its construction which in the fastidious judgment of our critics weigh down its sterling beauties.

It has done me great service, and to you I may say that I think it the best thing I have acted. Indeed, I like my own performance of it so well (which you know does not often happen to me), that I beg you will make A—— tell you something about it. I was beautifully dressed and looked very nice.

We have heard nothing of John for some time now, and my mother has ceased to express, if not to feel, anxiety about him, and seems tranquil at present; but after all she has suffered on his account, it is not, perhaps, surprising that she should subside into the calm of mere exhaustion from that cruel over-excitement.

Our appeal before the Lords, after having been put off once this week, will, in consequence of the threatened dissolution of Parliament, be deferred *sine die*, as the phrase is. Oh, what weary work this is for those who are tremblingly waiting for a result of vital importance to their whole fate and fortune! Thank Heaven, I am liberally endowed with youth's peculiar power and privilege of disregarding future sorrow, and unless under the immediate pressure of calamity can keep the anticipation of it at bay. My journal has become a mere catalogue of the names of people I meet and places I go to. I have had no time latterly for anything but the briefest possible registry of my daily doings. Mrs. Harry Siddons has taken a lodging in this street, nearly opposite to us, so that I have the happiness of seeing her rather oftener than I have been able to do hitherto; the girls come over, too; and as we have lately taken to acting charades and

proverbs, we spend our evenings very pleasantly together.

We are going to get up a piece called "Napoleon." I do not mean my cousins and ourselves, but that prosperous establishment, Covent Garden Theatre. Think of Bonaparte being acted! It makes one grin and shudder.

I have been three or four times to Mr. Pickersgill, and generally sit two hours at a time to him. I dare say he will make a nice picture of me, but his anxiety that it should in no respect resemble Sir Thomas Lawrence's drawing amuses me. I was in hopes that when I had done with him I should not have to sit to anybody for anything again. But I find I am to undergo that boredom for a bust by Mr. Turnerelli. I wish I could impress upon all my artist friends that my face is an inimitable original which nature never intended should be copied. Pazienza! I must say, though, that I grudge the time thus spent. I want to get on with my play, but I'm afraid for the next three weeks that will be hopeless.

To add to my occupations past, present, and to come, not having enough of acting with my professional duties in that line, I am going to take part in some private theatricals. Lord Francis Leveson wants to get up his version of Victor Hugo's "Hernani," at Bridgewater House, and has begged me, as a favour, to act the heroine; all the rest are to be amateurs. I have consented to this, not knowing well how to refuse, yet for one or two reasons I almost think I had better not have done so. I expect to be excessively amused by it, but it will take up a terrible deal of my

time, for I am sure they will need rehearsals without end. I do not know at all what our summer plans are; but I believe we shall be acting in the provinces till September, when if all things are quiet in Paris my father proposes going over with me and one or two members of the Covent Garden company, and playing there for a month or so. I think I should like that. I fancy I should like acting to a French audience; they are people of great intellectual refinement and discrimination, and that is a pleasant quality in an audience. I think my father seems inclined to take A—— with us and leave her there. A musical education can nowhere better be obtained, and under the care of Mrs. Foster, about whom I believe I wrote to you once a long letter, there could be no anxiety about her welfare.

I showed that part of your last letter which concerned my aunt Dall to herself, because I knew it would please her, and so it did; and she bids me tell you that she values your good-will and esteem extremely, and should do still more if you did not *misbestow so much of them on me.*

Emily Fitzhugh sent me this morning a seal with a pretty device, in consequence of my saying that I thought it was pleasanter to lean upon one's friends, morally, than to be leant upon by them,—an oak with ivy clinging to it and "Chiedo sostegno" for the motto. I do not think I shall use it to many people, though.

To-morrow Sheridan Knowles dines with us, to read a new play he has written, in which I am to act. In the evening we go to Lady Cork's, Sunday we have a

dinner-party here, Monday I act Camiola, Tuesday we go to Mrs. Harry's, Wednesday I act Camiola, and further I know not. Good-bye, dear; ever yours,

F. A. K.

The piece which I have referred to in this letter, calling itself "Bonaparte," was a sensational melodrama upon the fate and fortunes of the great emperor, beginning with his first exploits as a young artillery officer, himself pointing and firing the cannon at Toulon, to the last dreary agony of the heart-broken exile of St. Helena. It was well put upon the stage, and presented a series of historical pictures of considerable interest and effect, not a little of which was due to the great resemblance of Mr. Warde, who filled the principal part, to the portraits of Napoleon. He had himself, I believe, been in the army, and left it under the influence of a passion for the stage, which his dramatic ability hardly justified; for though he was a very respectable actor, he had no genius whatever, and never rose above irreproachable mediocrity. But his military training and his peculiar likeness to Bonaparte helped him to make his part in this piece very striking and effective, though it was not in itself the merest peg to hang "situations" on.

I was at this time sitting for my picture to Mr. Pickersgill, with whose portrait of my father in the part of Macbeth I have mentioned my mother's comically expressed dissatisfaction. Our kind friend, Major Dawkins, wished to give my father and mother a good portrait of me, and suggested Mr. Pickersgill, a very eminent portrait-painter, as the artist who would

be likely to execute it most satisfactorily. Mr. Pickersgill, himself, seemed very desirous to undertake it, and greatly as my sittings interfered with my leisure, of which I had but little, it was impossible under the circumstances that I should refuse, especially as he represented that if he succeeded, as he hoped to do, his painting me would be an advantage to him; portraits of public exhibitors being of course recognizable by the public, and, if good, serving the purpose of advertisements. Unluckily, Mrs. Jameson proposed accompanying me, in order to lighten by her very agreeable conversation the tedium of the process. Her intimate acquaintance with my face, with which Mr. Pickersgill was not familiar, and her own very considerable artistic knowledge and taste made her, however, less discreet in her comments and suggestions with regard to his operations than was altogether pleasant to him; and after exhibiting various symptoms of impatience, on one occasion he came so very near desiring her to mind her own business, that we broke off the sitting abruptly; and the offended painter adding, to my dismay, that it was quite evident he was not considered equal to the task he had undertaken, our own attitude towards each other became so constrained, not to say disagreeable, that on taking my leave I declined returning any more, and what became of Mr. Pickersgill's beginning of me I do not know. Perhaps he finished it by memory, and it is one of the various portraits of me, *qui courent le monde*, for some of which I never sat, which were taken either from the stage or were mere efforts of memory of the artists; one of which, a head of Bea-

trice, painted by my friend Mr. Sully, of Philadelphia, was engraved as a frontispiece to a small volume of poems I published there, and was one of the best likenesses ever taken of me.

The success of "The Maid of Honour" gave me great pleasure. The sterling merits of the play do not perhaps outweigh the one insuperable defect of the despicable character of the hero; one can hardly sympathize with Camiola's devotion to such an idol, and his unworthiness not only lessens the interest of the piece, but detracts from the effect of her otherwise very noble character. The performance of the part always gave me great pleasure, and there was at once a resemblance to and difference from my favourite character, Portia, that made it a study of much interest to me. Both the women, young, beautiful, and of unusual intellectual and moral excellence, are left heiresses to enormous wealth, and are in exceptional positions of power and freedom in the disposal of it. Portia, however, is debarred by the peculiar nature of her father's will from bestowing her person and fortune upon any one of her own choice; chance serves her to her wish (she was not born to be unhappy), and gives her to the man she loves, a handsome, extravagant young gentleman, who would certainly have been pronounced by all of us quite unworthy of her, until she proved him worthy by the very fact of her preference for him; while Camiola's lover is separated from her by the double obstacle of his royal birth and religious vow.

The golden daughter of the splendid republic receives and dismisses princes and kings as her

suitors, indifferent to any but their personal merits; we feel she is their equal in the lowest as their superior in the highest of their "qualities;" with Camiola it is impossible not to suspect that her lover's rank must have had some share in the glamour he throws over her. In some Italian version of the story that I have read, Camiola is called the "merchant's daughter;" and contrasting her bearing and demeanour with the easy courtesy and sweet, genial graciousness of Portia, we feel that she must have been of lower birth and breeding than the magnificent and charming Venetian. Portia is almost always in an attitude of (unconscious) condescension in her relations with all around her; Camiola, in one of self-assertion or self-defence. There is an element of harshness, bordering upon coarseness, in the texture of her character, which in spite of her fine qualities makes itself unpleasantly felt, especially contrasted with that of Portia, to whom the idea of encountering insolence or insult must have been as *impossible* as to the French duchess, who, warned that if she went into the streets alone at night she would probably be insulted, replied with ineffable security and simplicity, "Qui? moi!" One can imagine the merchant's daughter *growing up* to the possession of her great wealth, through the narrowing and hardening influences of sordid circumstances and habits of careful calculation and rigid economy, thrifty, prudent, just, and eminently conscientious; of Portia one can only think as of a creature born in the very lap of luxury and nursed in the midst of sunny magnificence, whose very element was elegant opulence and refined

splendour, and by whose cradle Fortune herself stood godmother. She seems like a perfect rose, blooming in a precious vase of gold and gems and exquisite workmanship. Camiola's contemptuous rebuff of her insolent courtier lover; her merciless ridicule of her fantastical, half-witted suitor; her bitter and harsh rebuke of Adorni when he draws his sword upon the man who had insulted her; above all, her hard and cold insensibility to his unbounded devotion, and the cruelty of making him the agent for the ransom of her lover from captivity (the selfishness of her passion inducing her to employ him because she knows how absolutely she may depend upon the unselfishness of his); and her final stern and peremptory claim of Bertrand's promise, are all things that Portia could never have done. Portia is the Lady of Belmont, and Camiola is the merchant's daughter, a very noble and magnanimous woman. In the munificent bestowal of their wealth, the one to ransom her husband's friend from death, the other to redeem her own lover from captivity, the manner of the gift is strikingly characteristic of the two natures. When Portia, radiant with the joy of relieving Bassanio's anguish, speaks of Antonio's heavy ransom as the "petty debt," we feel sure that if it had been half her fortune it would have seemed to her an insignificant price to pay for her husband's peace of mind. Camiola reads the price set upon her lover's head, and with grave deliberation says, "Half my estate, Adorni," before she bids him begone and purchase at that cost the prince's release from captivity. Moreover, in claiming her right of purchase over him, at the very moment of his union

with another woman, she gives a character of barter or sale to the whole transaction, and appeals for justice as a defrauded creditor, insisting upon her "money's worth," like Shylock himself, as if the love with which her heart is breaking had been a mere question of traffic between the heir of Sicily and the merchant's daughter. In spite of all which she is a very fine creature, immeasurably superior to the despicable man who accepts her favours and betrays her love. It is worthy of note that Bassanio, who is clearly nothing else remarkable, is every inch a gentleman, and in that respect no unfit mate for Portia; while the Sicilian prince is a blackguard, utterly beneath Camiola in every particular but that of his birth.

I remember two things connected with my performance of Camiola which amused me a good deal at the time. In the last scene, when she proclaims her intention of taking the veil, Camiola makes tardy acknowledgment to Adorni for his life-long constancy and love by leaving him a third of her estate, with the simple words, "To thee, Adorni, for thy true and faithful service" (a characteristic proceeding on the part of the merchant's daughter. Portia would have given him the ring from her finger, or the flower from her bosom, besides the fortune). I used to pause upon the last words, endeavouring to convey, if one look and tone might do it, all the regretful gratitude which ought to have filled her heart, while uttering with her farewell that first, last, and only recognition of his infinite devotion to her. One evening, when the audience were perfectly silent and one might have

"heard a pin drop," as the saying is, as I spoke these words, a loud and enthusiastic exclamation of "Beautiful!" uttered by a single voice resounded through the theatre, and was followed by such a burst of applause that I was startled and almost for a moment frightened by the sudden explosion of feeling, for which I was quite unprepared, and which I have never forgotten.

Another night, as I was leaving the stage, after the play, I met behind the scenes my dear friend Mr. Harness, with old Mr. Sotheby; both were very kind in their commendation of my performance, but the latter kept repeating with much emphasis, "But how do you contrive to make yourself look so beautiful?" a rather equivocal compliment, which had a peculiar significance; my beauty, or rather my lack of it, being a sore subject between us, as I had made it the reason for refusing to act Mary Stuart in his play of "Darnley," assuring him I was too ugly to look the part properly; so upon this accusation of making myself "look beautiful," I could only reply, with much laughing, "Good-looking enough for Camiola, but not for Queen Mary."

I received with great pleasure a congratulatory letter from Mrs. Jameson, which, in spite of my feeling her praise excessive, confirmed me in my opinion of the effect the piece ought to produce upon intelligent spectators. She had seen all the great dramatic performers of the Continental theatres, and had had many opportunities, both at home and abroad, of cultivating her taste and forming her judgment, and her opinion was, therefore, more valuable to me than much of the criticism and praise that I received.

Great Russell Street, March, 1831.

Dear Mrs. Jameson,

My mother is confined to her bed with a bad cold, or she would have answered your note herself; but, being disabled, she has commissioned me to do so, and desires me to say that both my father and herself object to my going anywhere without some member of my family as chaperon; and as this is a general rule, the infringement of it in a particular instance, however much I might wish it, would be better avoided, for fear of giving offence where I should be glad to plead the prohibition. She bids me add that she fears she cannot go out to-morrow, but that some day soon, at an early hour, she hopes to be able to accompany us both to the British Gallery. Will you come to us on Sunday evening? You see what is hanging over me for Thursday next; shall you go to see me?

Yours affectionately,

F. A. K.

I did not, and do not, at all question the good judgment of my parents in not allowing me to go into society unaccompanied by one or the other of themselves. The only occasion on which I remember feeling very rebellious with regard to this rule was that of the coronation of King William and Queen Adelaide, for which imposing ceremony a couple of peers' tickets had been very kindly sent us, but of which I was unable to avail myself, my father being prevented by business from escorting me, my mother being out of town, and my brother's countenance and protection not being, in their opinion, adequate for the

occasion. So John went alone to the abbey, and saw the fine show, and my peer's ticket remained unused on my mantelpiece, a constant suggestion of the great disappointment I had experienced when, after some discussion, it was finally determined that he was too young to be considered a proper chaperon for me. Dear me! how vexed I was! and how little charmed with my notoriety, which was urged as the special reason for my being hedged round with the utmost conventional decorum!

Great Russell Street, March, 1831.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

I have but two minutes to say two words to you, in answer to your very kind note. Both my mother and myself went out of town, not to recover from absolute indisposition, but to recruit strength. I am sorry to say she is far from well now, however; but as I think her present suffering springs from cold, I hope a few warm days will remove it. I am myself very well, except a bad cough which I have had for some time, and a very bad side-ache, which has just come on, and which, if I had time in addition to the inclination which I have, would prevent me from writing much more at present. I envy you your time spent in the country; the first days of spring and last of autumn should never be spent between brick houses and stone pavements. I am truly sorry for the anxieties you have undergone; your father is, I trust, quite recovered; and as to your dear baby (Mrs. Jameson's niece), remember it is but beginning to make you anxious, and will continue to do so as long

as it lives, which is a perfect Job's comforter, is it not? The story of your old man interested me very much; I suppose a parent can love all through a whole lifetime of absence: but do you think there can be a very strong and enduring affection in a child's bosom for a parent hardly known except by hearsay? I should doubt it. I must leave off now, and remain,

Always yours most truly,

F. A. KEMBLE.

Great Russell Street, March 29, 1831.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

Will you be kind enough to forward my very best acknowledgments to Sir Gerard Nöel, both for his good wishes and the more tangible proof of interest he sent me (a considerable payment for a box on my benefit night)? I am sorry you were alarmed on Monday. You alarmed us all; you looked so exceedingly ill that I feared something very serious had occurred to distress and vex you. Thank you for your critique upon my Constance; both my mother and myself were much delighted with it; it was every way acceptable to me, for the censure I knew to be deserved, and the praise I hoped was so, and they were blended in the very nicest proportions. We dine at six to-morrow. Lady Cork insisted upon five, but that was really too primitive, because, as the dandy said, "we cannot eat meat in the morning."

Ever yours most truly,

F. A. K.

Great Russell Street, March 30th, 1831.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

Thank you for your money; it is necessary to be arithmetical if one means to be economical, and I receive your tribute with more pleasure than that of a duchess. I sometimes hear people lament that they have anything to do with money. I do not at all share that feeling; money, after all, only represents other things. If one has much, it is always well to look to one's expenditure, or the much will become much less; and if one has little, and works hard for it, I cannot understand being above receiving the price of one's labour. In all kinds "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and I think it very foolish to talk as if we set no value upon that which we value enough to toil for. With regard to the tickets you wish me to send you, I must refer you to the theatre; for, finding that my wits and temper were both likely to be lost in the box-book, I sent the whole away to Mr. Notter, the box-book keeper, to whom you had better apply.

Yours ever truly,

F. A. K.

This and the preceding note refer to my benefit, of which, according to a not infrequent custom with the more popular members of the profession, I had undertaken to manage the business details, but found myself, as I have here stated, quite incompetent to encounter the worry of applications for boxes, and seats, and special places, etc., etc., and have never since, in the course of my whole public career, had anything to do with the management of my own affairs.

Great Russell Street, March, 1831.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

I was not at home yesterday afternoon when you sent to our house, and all the evening was so busy studying that I had not time to answer your despatch. Thank you for your last year's letter; it is curious to look back, even to so short a time, and see how the past affected one when it was the present. I remember I was very happy and comfortable at Bath, the critics notwithstanding. Thank you, too, for your more recent epistle. I am grateful for, and gratified by, your minute observation of my acting. I am always thankful for your criticisms, even when I do not quite agree with them; for I know that you are always kindly anxious that I should not destroy my own effects, which I believe I not unfrequently do. With regard to my action, unless in passages which necessarily require a specific gesture, such as, "You'll find them at the Marchesa Aldabella's," I never determine any one particular movement; and, of course, this must render my action different almost every time; and so it depends upon my own state of excitement and inspiration, so to speak, whether the gesture be forcible or not. My father desires me to send you Retsch's "Hamlet;" it is his, and I request you not to judge it too hastily: I have generally heard it abused, but I think in many parts it has very great merit. I am told that Retsch says he has no fancy for illustrating "Romeo and Juliet," which seems strange. One would have thought he would have delighted in portraying those lovely human beings, whom one always imagines endowed with an outward and visible

form as youthful, beautiful, and full of grace, as their passion itself was. Surely the balcony, the garden, and grave-yard scenes, would have furnished admirable subjects for his delicate and powerful hand. Is it possible that he thinks the thing beyond him? I must go to work. Good-bye.

Ever yours truly,

F. A. K.

You marked so many things in my manuscript book that I really felt ashamed to copy them all, for I should have filled more than half yours with my rhymes. I have just added to those I did transcribe a sonnet I wrote on Monday night after the play.

It may have been that the execution of "Faust," his masterpiece, disinclined Retsch for the treatment of another love story. He did subsequently illustrate "Romeo and Juliet" with much grace and beauty; but it is, as a whole, undoubtedly inferior to his illustrations of Goethe's tragical love story. Retsch's genius was too absolutely German to allow of his treating anything from any but a German point of view. Shakespeare, Englishman as he is, has written an Italian "Romeo and Juliet;" but Retsch's lovers are Teutonic in spite of their costume, and nowhere, as in the wonderful play, is the Southern passion made manifest through the Northern thought.

The private theatricals at Bridgewater House were fruitful of serious consequences to me, and bestowed on me a lasting friendship and an ephemeral love: the one a source of much pleasure, the other of some pain. They entailed much intimate intercourse with

Lord and Lady Francis Leveson Gower, afterwards Egerton, and finally Earl and Countess of Ellesmere, who became kind and constant friends of mine. Victor Hugo's play of "Hernani," full of fine and striking things, as well as of exaggerations verging on the ludicrous, had been most admirably rendered into rhymed verse by Lord Ellesmere. His translations from the German and his English version of "Faust," which was one of the first attempts to give a poetical rendering in our language of Goethe's masterpiece, had won him some literary reputation, and his rhymed translation of "Hernani" was a performance calculated to add to it considerably. He was a very accomplished and charming person; good and amiable, clever, cultivated, and full of fine literary and artistic taste. He was singularly modest and shy, with a gentle diffidence of manner and sweet, melancholy expression in his handsome face that did no justice to a keen perception of humour and relish of fun, which nobody who did not know him intimately would have suspected him of.

Of Lady Ellesmere I have already said that she was a sort of idol of mine in my girlhood, when first I knew her, and to the end of her life continued to be an object of my affectionate admiration. She was excellently conscientious, true, and upright; of a direct and simple integrity of mind and character which her intercourse with the great world to which she belonged never impaired, and which made her singular and unpopular in the artificial society of English high life. Her appearance always seemed to me strikingly indicative of her mind and character. The nobly deli-

cate and classical outline of her face, her pure, transparent complexion, and her clear, fearless eyes were all outward and visible expressions of her peculiar qualities. Her beautifully shaped head and fine profile always reminded me of the Pallas Athene on some antique gem, and the riding cap with the visor, which she first made fashionable, increased the classical resemblance. She was curiously wanting in imagination, and I never heard anything more comically literal than her description of her own utter *destitution* of poetical taste. After challenging in vain her admiration for the great poets of our language, I quoted to her, not without misgiving, some charmingly graceful and tender lines, addressed to herself by her husband, and asked her if she did not like those: "Oh yes," replied she, "I think they are very nice, but you know I think they would be just as nice *if they were not verses;* and whenever I hear any poetry that I like at all, I always think how much better I should like it if it was prose;" an explanation of her taste that irresistibly reminded me of the delightful Frenchman's sentiment about spinach: "Je n'aime pas les épinards, et je suis si content que je ne les aime pas! parce que si je les aimais, j'en mangerais beaucoup, et je ne peux pas les souffrir."

My intercourse with Lady Ellesmere, which had been a good deal interrupted during the years I passed out of England, was renewed the year before her death, when I visited her at Hatchford, where she was residing in her widowhood, and where I promised her when I left her I would return and stay with her again, but was never fortunate enough to do so, her death occurring not long afterwards.

During one of my last visits to Worsley Hall, Lord Ellesmere's seat in Lancashire, Lady Ellesmere had taken me all over the beautiful church they were building near their house, which was to be his and her final resting-place. After her death I made a pilgrimage to it for her sake, and when the service was over and the young members of the family had left their place of worship near the grave of their parents, I went into their chapel, where a fine monument with his life-sized effigy in marble had been dedicated to him by her love, and where close beside it and below it lay the marble slab on which her name was inscribed.

Our performance at Bridgewater House was highly successful and created a great sensation, and we repeated it three times for the edification of the great gay world of London, sundry royal personages included. Two of our company, Mr. Craven and Mr. St. Aubin, were really good actors; the rest were of a tolerably decent inoffensiveness. Mrs. Bradshaw, the charming Maria Tree of earlier days, accepted the few lines that had to be spoken by Donna Sol's duenna, and delivered the epilogue, which, besides being very graceful and playful, contains some lines for which I felt grateful to Lord Ellesmere's kindness, though he had certainly taken a poet's full license of embellishing his subject in his laudatory reference to his Donna Sol.

The whole thing amused me very much, and mixed up, as it soon came to be for me, with an element of real and serious interest, kept up the atmosphere of nervous excitement in which I was plunged from *morning till night*.

The play which Sheridan Knowles came to read to us was "The Hunchback." He had already produced several successful dramas, of which the most striking was Virginius, in which Mr. Macready performed the Roman father so finely. The play Knowles now read to us had been originally taken by him to Drury Lane in the hope and expectation that Kean would accept the principal man's part of Master Walter. Various difficulties and disagreements arising, however, about the piece, the author brought it to my father; and great was my emotion and delight in hearing him read it. From the first moment I felt sure that it would succeed greatly, and that I should be able to do justice to the part of the heroine, and I was anxious with my father for its production. The verdict of the Green Room was not, however, nearly as favourable as I had expected; and I was surprised to find that when the piece was read to the assembled company it was received with considerable misgiving as to its chance of success.

CHAPTER XI.

It is very curious that their experience tells so little among theatrical people in their calculation of the probable success of a new piece; perhaps it may be said that they cannot positively foresee the effect each actor or actress may produce with certain parts; but given the best possible representation of the piece, the precise temper of the particular audience who decides its fate on the first night of representation is always an unknown quantity in the calculation, and no technical experience ever seems to arrive at anything like even approximate certainty with regard to that. *I* felt perfectly sure of the success of "The Hunchback," but I think that was precisely because of my want of theatrical experience, which left me rather in the position of one of the public than one of the players, and there was much grave head-shaking over it, especially on the part of our excellent stage manager, Mr. Bartley, who was exceedingly faint-hearted about the experiment.

My father, with great professional disinterestedness, took the insignificant part of the insignificant lover, and Knowles himself filled that of the hero of the piece, the hunchback; a circumstance which gave the

part a peculiar interest, and compensated in some measure for the loss of the great genius of Kean, for whom it had been written.

The same species of uncertainty which I have said characterizes the judgments of actors with regard to the success of new pieces sometimes affects the appreciation authors themselves form of the relative merits of their own works, inducing them to value more highly some which they esteem their best, and to which that pre-eminence is denied by popular verdict. Knowles, while writing "The Hunchback," was so absorbed with the idea of what Kean's impersonation of it would probably be, that he was entirely unconscious of what the great actor himself probably perceived, that on the stage the part of Julia would overweigh and eclipse that of Master Walter. Knowles felt sure he had written a fine man's part, and was really not aware that the woman's part was still finer. What is yet more singular is that while he was writing "The Wife," which he did immediately afterwards, with a view to my acting the principal female character, he constantly said to me, "I am writing *such* a part for you!" and had no notion that the only part capable of any effect at all in the piece was that of Julian St. Pierre, the good-for-nothing brother of the duchess.

The play of "The Wife" was singularly wanting in interest, and except in the character of St. Pierre was ineffective and flat from beginning to end, in that respect a perfect contrast to "The Hunchback," in which the interest is vivid and strong and never flags from the first scene to the last. I was quite unable to

make anything at all of the part of Marianna, nor have I ever heard of its becoming prominent or striking in the hands of any one else.

"The Hunchback," according to my confident expectation, succeeded. Knowles played his own hero with great force and spirit, though he was in such a state of wild excitement that I expected to see him fly on the stage whenever he should have been off it, and *vice versâ*, and followed him about behind the scenes endeavouring to keep him in his right mind with regard to his exits and his entrances, and receiving from him explosive Irish benedictions in return for my warnings and promptings. Throughout the whole first representation I was really as nervous for and about him as I was about the play itself and my own particular part in it. My father did the impossible with Sir Thomas Clifford, in making him both dignified and interesting; and Miss Taylor was capital in the saucy Helen. My part played itself and was greatly liked by the audience; the piece was one of the most popular original plays of my time, and has continued a favourite alike with the public and the players. The part of the heroine is one, indeed, in which it would be almost impossible to fail; and every Julia may reckon upon the sympathy of her audience, the character is so pre-eminently effective and dramatic.

Of the play as a composition not much is to be said; it has little poetical or literary merit, and even the plot is so confused and obscure that nobody to my knowledge (not even the author himself, of whom I once asked an explanation of it) was ever able to make it out or give a plausible account of it. The charac-

ters are inconsistent and wanting in verisimilitude to a degree that ought to prove fatal to them with any tolerably reasonable spectators; in spite of all which the play is interesting, exciting, affecting, and humorous. The powerfully dramatic effect of the situations, and the two characters of Master Walter and Julia, the great scope for good acting in all the scenes in which they appear, the natural fire, passion, and pathos of the dialogue, in short, the great merits of the piece as an acting play cover all its defects; even the heroine's vulgar, flighty folly and the hero's absurd eccentricity interfering wonderfully little with the sympathy of the audience for their troubles and their final triumph over them. "The Hunchback" is a very satisfactory play to *see*, but let nobody who has seen it well acted attempt to read it in cold blood!

It had an immense run, and afforded me an opportunity of testing the difference between an infinite repetition of the text of Shakespeare and that of any other writer. I played Juliet upwards of a hundred nights without any change of part and did not weary of it; Julia, in "The Hunchback," after half the repetition became so tiresome to me that I would have given anything to have changed parts with my sprightly Helen, if only for a night, to refresh myself and recover a little from the extreme weariness I felt in constantly repeating Julia. The audience certainly would have suffered by the exchange, for Miss Taylor would not have played my part so much better than I, as I should have played hers worse than she did. Indeed, her performance of the character of Helen saved it from the reproach of coarseness, which very

few actresses would have been able to avoid while giving it all the point and lively humour which she threw into it. I had great pleasure in acting the piece with her, she did her business so thoroughly well and was so amiable and agreeable a fellow-worker.

In my last letter to Miss S—— I have spoken of a party at the Countess of Cork's, to which I went. She was one of the most curious figures in the London society of my girlish days. Very aged, yet retaining much of a vivacity of spirit and sprightly wit for which she had been famous as Mary Monckton, she continued till between ninety and a hundred years old to entertain her friends and the gay world, who frequently during the season assembled at her house.

I have still a note begging me to come to one of her evening parties, written under her dictation by a young person who used to live with her, and whom she called her "Memory;" the few concluding lines scrawled by herself are signed "*M. Cork, æt.* 92." She was rather apt to appeal to her friends to come to her on the score of her age; and I remember Rogers showing me an invitation he had received from her for one of the ancient concert evenings (these were musical entertainments of the highest order, which Mr. Rogers never failed to attend), couched in these terms: "Dear Rogers, leave the ancient music and come to ancient Cork, 93." Lady Cork's drawing-rooms were rather peculiar in their arrangement: they did not contain that very usual piece of furniture, a pianoforte, so that if ever she especially desired to have music she hired an instrument for the evening; the rest of the furniture consisted only of very large

and handsome armchairs placed round the apartments against the walls, to which they were *made fast* by some mysterious process, so that it was quite impossible to form a small circle or coterie of one's own at one of her assemblies. I remember when first I made this discovery expressing my surprise to the beautiful Lady Harriet d'Orsay, who laughingly suggested that poor old Lady Cork's infirmity with regard to the property of others (a well-known incapacity for discriminating between *meum* and *tuum*) might probably be the cause of this peculiar precaution with regard to her own armchairs, which it would not, however, have been a very easy matter to have stolen even had they not been chained to the walls. In the course of the conversation which followed, Lady E——, apparently not at all familiar with Chesterfield's Letters, said that it was Lady Cork who had originated the idea that after all heaven would probably turn out very dull to her *when she got there; sitting on damp clouds and singing "God save the King"* being her idea of the principal amusements there. This rather dreary image of the joys of the blessed was combated, however, by Lady E——, who put forth her own theory on the subject as far more genial, saying, "Oh dear, no; she thought it would be all splendid *fêtes* and delightful dinner parties, and charming, clever people; *just like the London season, only a great deal pleasanter because there would be no bores.*" With reference to Lady Cork's theory, Lady Harriet said, "I suppose it would be rather tiresome for her, poor thing! for you know she hates music, and there would be nothing to steal *but one another's wings.*"

Lady Cork's great age did not appear to interfere with her enjoyment of society, in which she lived habitually. I remember a very comical conversation with her in which she was endeavouring to appoint some day for my dining with her, our various engagements appearing to clash. She took up the pocket-book where hers were inscribed, and began reading them out with the following running commentary: "Wednesday—no, Wednesday won't do; Lady Holland dines with me—naughty lady!—won't do, my dear. Thursday?" "Very sorry, Lady Cork, we are engaged." "Ah yes, so am I; let's see—Friday; no, Friday I have the Duchess of C——, another naughty lady; mustn't come then, my dear. Saturday?" "No, Lady Cork, I am very sorry—Saturday, we are engaged to Lady D——." "Oh dear, oh dear! improper lady, too! but a long time ago, everybody's forgotten all about it,—very proper now! quite proper now!"

Lady Cork's memory seemed to me to stretch beyond the limits of what everybody had forgotten. She was quite a young woman at the time of the youth of George III., and spoke of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to whose wife she, then the Honourable Mary Monckton, was maid of honour. It is a most tantalizing circumstance to me now, to remember a fragment of a conversation between herself and my mother, on the occasion of the first visit I was ever taken to pay her. I was a very young girl; it was just after my return from school at Paris, and the topics discussed by my mother and her old lady friend interested me so little that I was looking out of the

window, and wondering when we should go away, when my attention was arrested by these words spoken with much emphasis by Lady Cork: "Yes, my dear, I was alone in the room, and the picture turned in its frame, and Lord Bute came out from behind it;" here, perceiving my eyes riveted upon her, she lowered her voice, and I distinctly felt that I was expected to look out of the window again, without having any idea, however, that the question was probably one of the character of a "naughty lady" of higher rank than those so designated to me some years later by old Lady Cork, who, if I may judge by this fragment of gossip, might have cleared up some disputed points, as to the relations between the Princess of Wales and the Prime Minister.

I do not know that Lady Cork's reputation for beauty ever equalled that she had for wit, but when I knew her, at upwards of ninety, she was really a very comely old woman. Her complexion was still curiously fine and fair, and there was great vivacity in her eyes and countenance, as well as wonderful liveliness in her manner. Her figure was very slight and diminutive, and at the parties at her own house she always was dressed entirely in white,—in some rich white silk, with a white bonnet covered with a rich blonde or lace veil on her head; she looked like a little old witch bride. I recollect a curious scene my mother described to me, which she witnessed one day when calling on Lady Cork, whom she had known for many years. She was shown into her dressing-room, where the old lady was just finishing her toilet. She was about to put on her gown, and remaining a moment

without it showed my mother her arms and neck, which were even then still white and round and by no means unlovely, and said, pointing to her maid, "Isn't it a shame! she won't let me wear my gowns low, or my sleeves short any more." To which the maid responded by throwing the gown over her mistress's shoulders, exclaiming at the same time, "Oh, fie, my lady! you ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk so at your age!"—a rebuke which the nonagenarian beauty accepted with becoming humility.

The unfortunate propensity of poor Lady Cork to appropriate all sorts of things belonging to other people, valueless quite as often as valuable, was matter of public notoriety, so that the fashionable London tradesmen, to whom her infirmity in this respect was well known, never allowed their goods to be taken to her carriage for inspection, but always exacted that she should come into their shops, where an individual was immediately appointed to follow her about and watch her during the whole time she was making her purchases.

Whenever she visited her friends in the country, her maid on her return home used to gather together whatever she did not recognize as belonging to her mistress, and her butler transmitted it back to the house where they had been staying. I heard once a most ludicrous story of her carrying off, *faute de mieux*, a *hedgehog* from a place where the creature was a pet of the porters, and was running tame about the hall as Lady Cork crossed it to get into her carriage. She made her poor "Memory" seize up the prickly beast,

but after driving a few miles with this unpleasant spiked foot-warmer, she found means to dispose of it at a small town, where she stopped to change horses, to a baker, to whom she gave it in payment for a sponge cake, assuring him that a hedgehog would be invaluable in his establishment for the destruction of black beetles, with which she knew, from good authority, that the premises of bakers were always infested.

The following note was addressed to Lady Dacre on the subject of a pretty piece called "Isaure," which she had written and very kindly wished to have acted at Covent Garden for my benefit. It was, however, judged of too slight and delicate a texture for that large frame, and the purpose was relinquished. I rather think it was acted in private at Hatfield House, Lady Salisbury filling the part of the heroine, which I was to have taken had the piece been brought out at Covent Garden.

My dear Lady Dacre,

Will you be kind enough to send "Isaure" to my father? We will take the greatest possible care of her, and return her to you in all safety. I am only sorry that he cannot have the pleasure of hearing you read it; for though it can take its own part very well, you know even Shakespeare is not the worse for the interpretation of a sweet voice, musical accent, and correct emphasis. With regard to the production of the piece on the stage, I do not like to venture an opinion, because my short experience has been long enough already to show me how easily I might be mistaken in such matters.

There is no rule by which the humours of an audience can be predicted. On a benefit night, indeed, I feel sure that the piece would succeed, and answer your kind intention of adding to the attractions of the bill, be they what they might; but our judges are not the same, you know, two consecutive evenings, and therefore it is impossible to foretell the sentence of a second representation, for no "benefit" but that of the public itself. Isaure is a refined patrician beauty, and I am sometimes inclined to think that the Memphian head alone is of fit proportions for uttering oracles in the huge space of our modern stage. My father, however, is, from long experience, the best guesser of these riddles, and he will tell you honestly his opinion as to your heroine's public capacity. I am sure he will find his own reward in making her acquaintance. I am, my dear Lady Dacre, faithfully yours,

FANNY KEMBLE.

Great Russell Street.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

Thank you for the book you were so good as to send me. I have read that which concerns the Cenci in it, and think Leigh Hunt's reflections on the story and tragedy very good. I am glad you were at the play last night, because I thought I acted well, —at least, I tried to do so. I stayed the first act of the new after-piece, and was rather amused by it. I do not know how the ladies' "inexpressibles" might affect the fortunes of the second act, but I liked all their gay petticoats in the first, extremely. The

weather is not very propitious for us; we start to-morrow at nine. I send you the only copy of Sophocles I can lay my hand on this morning. Yours ever truly,

F. A. Kemble.

A little piece called "The Invincibles," in which a smart corps of young Amazons in uniform were officered by Madame Vestris in the prettiest regimentals ever well worn by woman, was the novelty I alluded to. The effect of the female troop was very pretty, and the piece was very successful.

I had only lately read Shelley's great tragedy, and Mrs. Jameson had been so good as to lend me various notices and criticisms upon it. The hideous subject itself is its weak point, and his selection of it one cause for doubting Shelley's power as a dramatic writer. Everything else in the terrible play suggests the probable loss his death may have been to the dramatic literature of England. At the same time, the tenor of all his poems denotes a mind too unfamiliar with human life and human nature in their ordinary normal aspects and conditions for a good writer of plays. His metaphysical was almost too much for his poetical imagination, and perhaps nothing between the morbid horror of that Cenci story and the ideal grandeur of the Greek Prometheus would have excited him to the dramatic handling of any subject.

His translation from Calderon's "El Magico Prodigioso" and his bit of the Brocken scene from "Faust" are fine samples of his power of dramatic

style; he alone could worthily have translated the whole of "Faust;" but I suppose he really was too deficient in the vigorous flesh-and-blood vitality of the highest and healthiest poetical genius to have been a dramatist. He could not deal with common folk nor handle common things; humour, that great *tragic* element, was not in him; the heavens and all their clouds and colours were his, and he floated and hovered and soared in the ethereal element like one native to it. Upon the firm earth his foot wants firmness, and men and women as they are, are at once too coarse and complex, too robust and too infinitely various for his delicate, fine, but in some sense feeble handling.

Browning is the very reverse of Shelley in this respect; both have written one fine play and several fine dramatic compositions; but throughout Shelley's poetry the dramatic spirit is deficient, while in Browning's it reveals itself so powerfully that one wonders how he has escaped writing many good plays besides the "Blot on the Scutcheon" and that fine fragmentary succession of scenes, "Pippa Passes."

Great Russell Street.

Dear Mrs. Jameson,

I fear I am going to disappoint you, and 'tis with real regret that I do so, but I have been acting every night almost for the last month, and when to-day I mentioned my project of spending this my holiday evening with you, both my aunt and my father seemed to think that in discharging my debt to you I was defrauding nearer and older creditors; and

suggested that my mother, who really sees but little of me now, might think my going out to-night unkind. I cannot, therefore, carry out my plan of visiting you, and beg that you will forgive my not keeping my promise this evening. I am moreover so far from well that my company would hardly give you much pleasure, nor could I stay long if I came, for early as it is my head is aching for its pillow already.

As soon as a week occurs in which I have *two* holidays I will try to give you one of them. I send you back Crabbe, which I have kept for ever; for a great poet, which he is, he is curiously unpoetical, I think. Yours ever truly,

F. A. KEMBLE.

Great Russell Street.

DEAR MRS. JAMESON,

My mother bids me say that you certainly will suppose she is mad, or else *Mother Hubbard's dog;* for when you called she was literally ill in bed, and this evening she cannot have the pleasure of receiving you, because she is engaged out, here in our own neighbourhood, to a very quiet tea. She bids me thank you very much for the kindness of your proposed visit, and express her regret at not being able to avail herself of it. If you can come on Thursday, between one and two o'clock, I shall be most happy to see you. Thank you very much for Lamb's "Dramatic Specimens;" I read the scene you had copied from "Philaster" directly; how fine it is! how I should like to act it! Mr. Harness has sent me the first volume of the family edition of the

"Old Plays." I think sweeping those fine dramas clean is a good work that cannot be enough commended. What treasures we possess and make no use of, while we go on acting "Gamesters" and "Grecian Daughters," and such poor stuff! But I have no time for ecstasies or exclamations. Yours ever most truly,

F. A. Kemble.

I have said that hardly any new part was ever assigned to me that I did not receive with a rueful sense of inability to what I called "do anything with it." Julia in "The Hunchback," and Camiola in "The Maid of Honour," were among the few exceptions to this preparatory attack of despondency; but those I in some sort chose myself, and all my other characters were appointed me by the management, in obedience to whose dictates and with the hope of serving the interests of the theatre I suppose I should have acted Harlequin if I had been ordered to do so.

Lady Teazle and Mrs. Oakley were certainly no exceptions to this experience of a cold fit of absolute incapacity with which I received every new part appointed me, and my studying of them might have been called lugubrious, whatever my subsequent performance of them may have been. My mother was of invaluable assistance to me in the process, and I owe to her whatever effect I produced in either part. She had great comic as well as pathetic power, and the incisive point of her delivery gave every shade of meaning of the dialogue with admirable truth and pungency; her own performance of Mrs. Oakley had

been excellent; I acted it, even with the advantage of her teaching, very tamely. Jealousy, in any shape, was not a passion that I sympathized with; the tragic misery of Bianca's passion was, however, a thing I could imagine sufficiently well to represent it; but not so Mrs. Oakley's fantastical frenzies. But the truth is that it was not until many years later and in my readings of Shakespeare that I developed any real comic faculty at all; and I have been amused in the later part of my public career to find comedy often considered my especial gift, rather than the tragic and pathetic one I was supposed at the beginning of it to possess.

The fact is that except in broad farce, where the principal ingredient being humour, animal spirits and a grotesque imagination, which are of no particular age, come strongly into play, comedy appears to me decidedly a more mature and complete result of dramatic training than tragedy. The effect of the latter may, as I myself exemplified, be tolerably achieved by force of natural gifts, aided but little by study; but a fine comedian *must* be a fine artist; his work is intellectual, and not emotional, and his effects address themselves to the critical judgment and not the passionate sympathy of an audience. Tact, discretion, fine taste, are quite indispensable elements of his performance; he must be really a more complete actor than a great tragedian need be. The expression of passion and emotion appears to be an interpretation of nature, and may be forcibly rendered sometimes with but little beyond the excitement of its imaginary experience on the actor's own sensibility; while a

highly educated perfection is requisite for the actor who, in a brilliant and polished representation of the follies of society, produces by fine and delicate and powerful delineations the picture of the vices and ridicules of a highly artificial civilization.

Good company itself is not unapt to be very good acting of high comedy, while tragedy, which underlies all life, if by chance it rises to the smooth surface of polite, social intercourse, agitates and disturbs it and produces even in that uncongenial sphere the rarely heard discord of a natural condition and natural expression of natural feeling.

Of my performance of Mrs. Oakley I have but one recollection, which is that of having once, while acting it with my father, disconcerted him to such a degree as to compel him to turn up the stage in an uncontrollable fit of laughter. I remember the same thing happening once when I was playing Beatrice to his Benedict. I have not the least notion what I did that struck my father with such irrepressible merriment, but I suppose there must have been something in itself irresistibly ludicrous to him, towards whom my manner was habitually respectfully deferential (for our intercourse with our parents, though affectionate, was not familiar, and we seldom addressed them otherwise than as "sir" and "ma'am"), to be pelted by me with the saucy sallies of Beatrice's mischievous wit, or pummelled with the grotesque outbursts of poor Mrs. Oakley's jealous fury.

Our personal relation, which thus rendered our performance of comedy together especially comical to my father, added infinitely to my distress in all

tragedies in which we acted together; the sense of his displeasure or the sight of his anguish invariably bringing him, my father, and not the part he was acting, before me; and, as in the play of "The Stranger" and the pathetic little piece of "The Deserter," affecting me with almost uncontrollable emotion.

Great Russell Street, April 10, 1831.

My dearest H——,

I owe you something like an explanatory note after that ejaculatory one I sent you the other day. You must have thought me crazy; but indeed, since all these late alarming reports from Spain, until the news came of John's safety, I did not know how much fear and anxiety lay under the hope and courage I had endeavoured to maintain about him.

From day to day I had read the reports and tried to reason with regard to their probability, and to persuade my mother that we had every cause for hoping the best; and it was really not until that hope was realized that it seemed as if all my mental nerves and muscles, braced to the resistance of calamity, had suddenly relaxed and given way under the relief from all further apprehension of it. I have kept much of my forebodings to myself, but they have been constant and wretched enough, and my gratitude for this termination of them is unspeakable.

I heard last night a report which I have not mentioned to my mother for fear it should prove groundless. Horace Twiss showed me a note in which a gentleman assured him that John had positively

taken his passage in a Government vessel, and was now on his way home; even if this is true, I am afraid to tell my mother, because if the vessel should be delayed a day or two by weather or any other cause, her anxiety will have another set of apprehensions to feed upon, and to prey upon her with. She desires her best love to you; she likes your pamphlet on "The Education of the People" very much, at the same time that it has not convinced her that instruction is wholesome for the lower orders; she thinks the dependence of helplessness and ignorance a better security (for them, or for those above them, I wonder?) than the power of reasoning rightly and a sense of duty, in which opinion, as you will believe, I do not agree.

Thank you for your account of your visit to Wroxton Abbey [the seat of the Earl of Guilford]; it interested me very much; trees are not to me, as they seem to be to you, the most striking and beautiful of all natural objects, though I remember feeling a good deal of pain at the cutting down of a particular tree that I was very fond of.

At the entrance of Weybridge was a deserted estate and dilapidated mansion, Portmore Park, once a royal domain, through which the river ran and where we used to go constantly to fish. There was a remarkably beautiful cedar tree whose black boughs spread far over the river, and whose powerful roots, knotted in every variety of twist, formed a cradle from which the water had gradually washed away the earth. Here I used to sit, or rather lie, reading, or writing sometimes, while the others pursued their sport, and

enjoying the sound and sight of the sparkling water which ran undermining my bed and singing treacherous lullabies to me the while. For two years this tree was my favourite haunt; the third, on our return to Weybridge from London, on my running to the accustomed spot, I found the hitherto intercepted sun staring down upon the water and the bank, and a broad, smooth, white *tabula rasa* level with the mossy turf, which was all that remained of my cedar canopy; and though it afforded an infinitely more commodious seat than the twisted roots, I never returned there again.

To-morrow we dine with the F——s, and there is to be a dance in the evening; on Wednesday I act Constance; Thursday there is a charade party at the M——s'; Friday I play Mrs. Beverley; and Monday and Wednesday next, Camiola. I hope by-and-by to act Camiola very well, but I am afraid the play itself can never become popular; the size of the theatre and the public taste of the present day are both against such pieces; still, the attempt seemed to me worth making, and if it should prove successful we might revive one or two more of Massinger's plays; they are such sterling stuff compared with the Isabellas, the Jane Shores, the everything but Shakespeare. You saw in my journal what I think about Camiola. I endeavour as much as I can to soften her, and if I can manage to do so I shall like her better than any part I have played except my dear Portia, who does not need softening.

I am too busy just now to read "Destiny" [Miss Ferrier's admirable novel]; my new part and dresses

and rehearsals will occupy me next week completely. I have taken a new start about "The Star of Seville" [the play I was writing], and am working away hard at it. I begin to see my way through it. I wish I could make anything like an acting play of it; we want one or two new ones so very much.

My riding goes on famously, and Fozzard thinks so well of my progress that the other day he put me upon a man's horse—an Arab—which frightened me half to death with his high spirits and capers; but I sat him, and what is more, rode him. Tuesday we go to a very gay ball a little way out of town; Saturday we go to a party at old Lady Cork's, who calls you Harriet and professes to have known you well and to remember you perfectly.

Now, H——, as to what you say of fishing, if you are bloody-minded enough to desire to kill creatures for sport, in Heaven's name why don't you do it? The sin lies in the inclination (by-the-by, I think that's *half* a mistake). Never mind, your inclination to fish and my desire to be the tigress at the Zoological Gardens have nothing whatever in common. I admire and envy the wild beast's swiftness and strength, but if I had them I don't think I would tear human beings to bits unless I were *she*, which was not what I wished to be, only as strong and agile as she; do you see? I am in a great hurry, dear, and have written you an inordinately stupid letter; never mind, the next shall be inconceivably amusing. Just now my head is stuffed full of amber-coloured cashmere and white satin. My mother begs to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Kemble. Always affectionately yours,

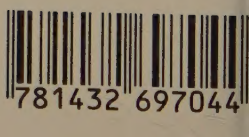
F. A. K.

My determination to *soften* the character of Camiola is another indication of my imperfect comprehension of my business as an actress, which was not to reform but to represent certain personages. Massinger's "Maid of Honour" is a stern woman, not without a very positive grain of coarse hardness in her nature. My attempt to *soften* her was an impertinent endeavour to alter his fine conception to something more in harmony with my own ideal of womanly perfection. I was a very indifferent actress and had not begun to understand my work, nor was Mr. Macready far wrong when, many years after, he spoke to me as "not knowing the rudiments of my profession."

END OF VOL. II.

PRINTED AT THE CAXTON PRESS, BECCLES. L. & Co.

Printed in the United States
135368LV00006B/25/A



Kessinger Publishing's® Legacy Reprints

Thousands of Scarce and Hard-to-Find Books

- Americana
- Ancient Mysteries
- Animals
- Anthropology
- Architecture
- Arts
- Astrology
- Bibliographies
- Biographies & Memoirs
- Body, Mind & Spirit
- Business & Investing
- Children & Young Adult
- Collectibles
- Comparative Religions
- Crafts & Hobbies
- Earth Sciences
- Education
- Ephemera
- Fiction
- Folklore
- Geography
- Health & Diet
- History
- Hobbies & Leisure
- Humor
- Illustrated Books
- Language & Culture
- Law
- Life Sciences
- Literature
- Medicine & Pharmacy
- Metaphysical
- Music
- Mystery & Crime
- Mythology
- Natural History
- Outdoor & Nature
- Philosophy
- Poetry
- Political Science
- Psychiatry & Psychology
- Rare Books
- Reference
- Religion & Spiritualism
- Rhetoric
- Sacred Books
- Science Fiction
- Science & Technology
- Self-Help
- Social Sciences
- Symbolism
- Theatre & Drama
- Theology
- Travel & Explorations
- War & Military
- Women
- Yoga

Download a free catalog and search our titles at: www.kessinger.net

KESSINGER PUBLISHING

ISBN 1432697048

9 781432 697044

BK00610387